# TELEMACHUS

C. EDMUND MAURICE

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# TELEMACHUS

BY

C. EDMUND MAURICE

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AND REVERENCE MY
HUSBAND

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*First published in 1927*

# FOREWORD

THE writer of this book was my near neighbour for about forty-five years, and I had ample opportunity of knowing his manner of life and of forming an estimate of his character. The son of Frederick Dennison Maurice, he bore a close resemblance to his father, whose portrait hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. In the whole tenor and issues of his life he was worthy of his father. In addition to the literary work in which he was constantly engaged, he was forward in every movement to promote the welfare of man and the peace of the world. Modest and unpretentious in his manner and his speech, he probably never knew how his character, his benevolence, his untiring purpose, impressed his neighbours and the world. His life was one shining example of the Christianity which his father preached; and he will live in the memory of all who knew him, even if his books do not survive in the unceasing streams of writing which to-day pour from the press, as a *chevalier sans peur, sans reproche*. But *Telemachus* may live, and certainly ought to live; for it has the qualities of artistic finish which have secured for books as brief as this a deserved immortality. The *Télémaque* of Fénelon is not more finished in its way than the *Telemachus* of C. E. Maurice. And interesting as Telemachus the son of Ulysses is, the story of Telemachus the monk, who brought to an end the gladiatorial games by his heroic self-sacrifice, is of deeper human value and leads into spiritual regions which Homer did not know.

The book is a fine work of imagination which rests on a very full knowledge of the history and conditions of the period in which the plot is set. We are carried at once to the Egyptian desert, where men were seeking to escape from the abominations and disorders which preceded the fall of Rome at the hand of Alaric and the Goths. We meet all the notable men of the time, Jerome with his uncompromising severity; Chrysostom with his large sympathy and noble eloquence, overthrown by the unscrupulous Theophilus, the Patriarch of Alexandria; Stilicho, the great Vandal, who saved Rome for the moment; the Pagan Senator Symmachus, and the poets Claudius and Prudentius. We live in that life of the past, and reap the results of the author's close historical study.

But the story moves with a sure swiftness which indicates a master's hand. The development of the monk Telemachus into the martyr of the closing scene gives flesh and blood to what is otherwise only a name. And the love-story of Eric and Elfrida, the Goths, not only supplies a rich human interest to the great episode, but ventures to give a very human explanation to the brave self-sacrifice of the monk.

The dialogues are so natural, and so rich with passages from the contemporary literature, and the whole development of the plot is so unforced and easy, that it would be difficult to deny Mr. Maurice a place among the best writers of historical fiction.

But it is not as fiction that the book may hold its own with the coming generations. It is as an imaginative rendering of a famous passage in Church history, a turning-point in the victory of Christian over Pagan ethics, a successful attempt to pierce to the heart of a situation which is generally unrealized and incomprehensible, that *Telemachus* may claim a lasting place among the books of all time.

To me, may I say, the book is a real treasure, as a transcript in the form of fiction of a character that I honoured and loved in real life.

ROBERT F. HORTON.

CHESILS, HAMPSTEAD.
*July* 30, 1927.

# PREFACE

The story of Telemachus was probably first made familiar to the general reader by Gibbon. The interest in it was revived by Tennyson's poem "St. Telemachus."

It will at once strike the readers of those two great writers that their conceptions of the influence which the previous career of Telemachus produced on his character and work were directly opposed to each other—Gibbon speaks of Telemachus's death as having been more useful to mankind than his life, and describes him as the only monk who ever died a martyr to humanity. Tennyson, on the contrary, sees in his early asceticism and retirement from the world the natural preparation for his heroic death.

I trust that it will be seen that I am far nearer to the poet than to the historian in my view of the case. Indeed, I have felt sometimes as if much of my picture was directly intended as an answer to Gibbon's shallow and flippant sneer.

Yet, on the other hand, if Tennyson's poem was intended to give a complete view of the influences which stirred Telemachus to his task, I venture to distrust the picture as incomplete. It seems to me that so long and difficult an expedition would scarcely have been undertaken with the sole object of suppressing a custom of which the traveller had had no personal experience. I have therefore suggested that some more personal motive must have been combined with the enthusiasm of humanity and religious zeal.

No doubt the monks of Egypt were eager to redress the wrongs, both temporal and spiritual, of Alexandria and Antioch ; but then the citizens of those cities were in many cases known to them personally, and they had had experience of the evils which they desired to cure.

The Gladiator shows, on the other hand, were merely a tradition in the East, and Rome was very far off.

Surely, therefore, it is more reasonable to suppose that the act of Telemachus was connected with some such train of circumstances as I have described, that is, with the historical expulsion of the Origenists from Nitria, and the imaginary acquaintance of Telemachus with Eric and Elfrida.

It is true, no doubt, that Theodoret does not seem to think such an explanation necessary, and that he speaks as if Telemachus came from the East for the sole purpose of suppressing the Gladiators ; but it is obvious that Theodoret's statement is merely an incomplete hint and that the event took place when he was about ten years old. It seems also most unlikely that he was ever in Rome.

C. EDMUND MAURICE.

NOTE.—My husband wrote this book many years ago, but for various reasons it was not issued during his lifetime. Before his death he expressed the desire that it should be published. I am glad that in accordance with his wishes it is now being issued, and trust that many will have the pleasure of reading it.

I am greatly indebted to my friend, Mrs. Dryhurst, for reading the proofs.

EMILY SOUTHWOOD MAURICE.

HAMPSTEAD, N.W. 3.

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# TELEMACHUS

## *CHAPTER I*

## *THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD AND OUT OF THE WORLD*

. . . . "My own East!
How nearer God we were! He glows above,
With scarce an intervention, presses close,
And palpitatingly, His soul o'er ours!
We feel Him, nor by painful reason know!"
ROBERT BROWNING.

IT was the evening of a summer day, about the year 394, when a little procession might have been seen moving slowly over the plain which separates the city of Memphis from the sacred mountain of Nitria. The main body of the travellers were monks; but though the deserts of Egypt were, at that time, the headquarters of the Christian monasteries, very few of the faces bore the marks of either Egyptian or Greek descent. The party had evidently come from a distant country; and, in spite of the fatigue of a long journey, they showed signs of the curiosity which was naturally excited by a strange region of which they had heard much.

At the head of the group rode two ladies, both dressed in nun's robes, but with a marked difference, even in their manner of wearing the dress, and still more in their faces and bearing. Both were Roman ladies of high rank;

and something lingered in each of an almost unconscious air of command; but while in Paula, the elder of the two, this manner was carefully suppressed, and, indeed, generally hidden by the intensity of her devotional feeling, in Melaneia, the younger lady, it seemed a much more prominent characteristic, which she had no desire to hide, and about which she had no feeling of shame. Her nun's dress was disposed in folds of studied gracefulness about her; and some silver ornaments betrayed a tendency not altogether in keeping with the stricter religious profession. Her dark hair, rich complexion, and animated features formed a remarkable contrast to the worn face and stern, subdued expression of her companion.

Between the camels on which the ladies were mounted walked an elderly monk of very striking appearance, to whom both the nuns seemed to pay very great deference. His pale, worn features showed traces of a sternly ascetic life; but there was nothing in his face to indicate that rapt and enthusiastic devotion so common among the Eastern monks; on the contrary, an expression of worldly wisdom about the bright and thoughtful eyes, and a humorous curl around the corner of the mouth, suggested a disposition that would hold in check any temptation to religious extravagance that a monastic life might produce. At the same time there appeared in his bearing an air of authority, not derived, like that of the ladies, from traditions of birth and rank, but from the consciousness of an internal power which had been long recognized and generally accepted.

"Nay, my daughter," he was saying to the younger lady, "do not think that I blame you for these yearnings of the flesh after your son. It is not in every case, nor to everyone, that I would have recommended such a sacrifice as you have made; and there must necessarily be times when you are inclined to look back with regret and doubt upon

the past. Yet it may be that at the present moment it is the fatigue and vexations of the journey that bring back these thoughts, rather than any real doubt in your conscience as to the lawfulness of the sacrifice."

"I think, Father," replied Melaneia with some vexation, "that I have given you but little cause to doubt my willingness to bear even harder trials than this journey has given us. But it is scarcely to be wondered at that you cannot realize the feelings of a parent. You have encountered and done much for the cause of the Church, but I think that from your lofty height of sanctity you look down too much on our frail and suffering womanhood."

"Ah, Melaneia," said the elder lady, "you wrong the holy Hieronymus. I too have known losses, and have ever found him a kind and sympathizing friend, as ready to share in my troubles as to guide me to the right use of them."

"I thank you, my daughter," said Jerome gravely; but seeing that Melaneia was still unappeased he hastened to change the conversation. "See," he said, "the sacred mountain of Nitria is before us; and here are those who are realizing daily that sacred life of contemplation, which we, by our feeble efforts in the midst of a corrupt world, can only so faintly copy."

As he spoke there rose on the evening air the sound of a hymn chanted by a vast number of voices; and on the mountain before them they saw a crowd of strangely dressed figures, whose dark forms stood out against the glowing sunset sky. These men were not clad in the decorous gown of the Roman monk, but in untanned skins; their heads and feet were bare, and they accompanied the sound of their voices with the most wild and passionate gestures. The little band of Roman visitors paused, and Jerome and others fell on their knees almost involuntarily; Paula clasped her hands and raised her eyes to heaven, and Melaneia seemed startled and impressed by so unusual a sight. As

the hymn ceased, the visitors saw that an old man had detached himself from the group, and was descending the hill towards them. Jerome advanced to meet him, and asked his blessing. The Abbot gave it, and said, "Come you to live among us, my son? Your speech and dress seem to show that you come from a far country."

Before Jerome could reply Melaneia, who had approached unobserved, answered, "We have come from Rome, Father, to see this home of the saints, and to bring you an offering worthy of the reverence which we owe you."

The Egyptian monk drew back in amazement at this unexpected greeting from a woman; but Melaneia, not regarding his surprise, made a sign to a servant, who began to unload one of the camels. When the chest which formed its chief burden had been taken down and opened, it was found to contain a mass of silver cups and plates. These, by Melaneia's orders, were placed at the feet of the Abbot.

"See, Father," she said, "we have brought these as a humble offering to you and your holy brethren."

Abbot Pambo glanced slightly on the splendid show as it glittered on the sand at his feet; then his eye rested with a troubled and half-angry look on the beautiful face and graceful figure which was bending before him. At last, turning away impatiently, he said:

"We have no need of such things, my daughter; but, since you have brought them so far, they can be sold for the benefit of the hermits who dwell in the wilds of Lybia. They are poorer than we are, and have more difficulty in gaining their livelihood."

Melaneia rose to her feet with a gesture of amazement and vexation. "Do you know, my Father," she said, "that there is here three hundredweight of silver?"

Pambo answered, with his face still averted from the speaker, "God, who weighs in His balance the mountains

and forests, will know, better than you or I, the weight of your silver. As for me, I have nothing to do with such things."

Then, as if moved by a sudden impulse, he turned towards Melaneia, and said in a tone of earnest appeal, "Do not forget, my daughter, that God, who did not despise the widow's mites, prizes them perhaps more highly than all the presents of the rich."

Melaneia was silent for a few moments. Contradictory feelings seemed to be disputing for the mastery within her; irritation at a tone of reproof to which she was unused, disappointment and mortified pride at the rejection of her present were the first impulses of her mind; but, in opposition to these feelings, there was a sense of awe unknown before, as if, for the first time, she caught a clear glimpse of that spiritual life of which she had heard and talked so often.

Pambo watched her with an interest which a little modified his first sternness. Jerome too felt pained for his pupil, and longed to say something on her behalf, yet knew not what to say. At last Melaneia herself spoke. "I would gladly," said she, "learn something of a life which raises you so far above the needs and weaknesses of mankind. If I might stay here longer, perhaps even I could attain to that standard of saintliness which is impossible in Rome."

"Nay, my daughter," said Pambo, "this is no place for women."

"Suffer me to intercede for this lady," said Jerome. "I too have lived in the deserts, and have endured the troubles and torments of those who live there. But I have also known something of the world in cities; and have seen perhaps more than most men of the self-sacrifice and devotion of women; perchance, if those who live in deserts did more to recognize that devotion, they might

achieve more of the purification of the world outside than they have yet done."

As Pambo stood perplexed and astonished at this speech, Paula, who had watched the scene in silent anxiety, ventured to come to the rescue.

"Perhaps," said she to Pambo, "you may not be aware that it is the holy Hieronymus who is speaking to you."

"What," exclaimed the Abbot, "is this the holy and learned Hieronymus! You are most welcome to Nitria; and I am willing to be guided by your advice, though it seems somewhat strange to me. There may be a room in the place provided for our guests where these women can rest while they remain here. But understand, my daughters, that if anyone stay here for more than a week they must begin to earn their livelihood by work. This has always been the rule for men, and I see not that we can make other rules for women."

"Doubt not that I will work, Father," said Melaneia eagerly.

"For my part," said Paula, "I will willingly do all that the rules of the holy mountain may require; but I think," she said, turning to Jerome, "that it was not your intention to stay more than one day, or at most two, in any monastery."

Pambo could hardly suppress a look of relief; but he hastened to say that the duty of hospitality to strangers was always recognized on the sacred mountain, and that accommodation would doubtless be found for these guests. He then conducted them to the guest-room, and food was brought by a young monk.

During the meal Jerome inquired much of the rules of life in the monastery, and Paula and Melaneia listened eagerly to Pambo's answers. There were enough of strange experiences in the lives of those who inhabited these cells to have interested a far less keen observer than Jerome; and as he had known much of the sufferings

and struggles which drove men into the desert, and of those which found them when they were there, he could often say a word of sympathy and advice which was not unwelcome to his hearers. Then Pambo began to ask in turn about the wonderful city from which Jerome had so recently come.

"There are many," said Pambo, "who have fled to us from Rome, and who speak as if it were scarce possible for a Christian to live there; yet you tell me that there are men, and even women, in that city who live as noble and devoted lives as any that we can show here."

"Truly, my Father," answered Jerome, his face darkening as he spoke, "I would not be understood to use such words of any but a few; and even those maintain their Christian life with difficulty, for Rome is in truth but a modern Babylon, doomed as surely to destruction as the old Babylon was. For lust and luxury, cruelty and self-indulgence have eaten it up, so that the heathen mock at us, and say that those who would destroy the worship of the old gods have nothing nobler to show in its place; nay, rather, that they are draining out of Rome the old traditions of manliness and vigour which brought victory to its armies and wisdom to its senators."

"And yet," answered Pambo, "for yourself, or at least for some of your disciples, you think it well to maintain a hold on this corrupt city, and to work for its redemption from destruction?"

"Surely, my Father," said Jerome, "it is not well to despair of any while life and hope last. Something may yet be done, even by such humble workers as our little company on the Aventine, to save at least a remnant from destruction. If I dare not stretch my hope as far as the learned Origen would have done, I feel no need to despair, at least on this side of the grave."

As he spoke, he turned his eyes for a moment from his

host, and encountered those of a young monk who had been waiting upon them, and whose cheeks seemed suddenly to flush at some words of the speaker. Pambo caught the glance which passed between the two, and at once called the young monk to him and sent him on an errand to another part of the monastery. Jerome had noticed with interest the effect of his words, and now turned to the Abbot to ask for further information on the matter.

"This youth," replied Pambo, "is an Alexandrian, named Telemachus, who was brought at an early age by his parents to the holy bishop Athanasius. Athanasius was much interested in the youth, and, while imparting to him freely the results of his great learning, made much use of him in various parts of his work, but particularly in the inscribing of MSS. In this way he became particularly interested in the works of the learned Origen, of whose life he had heard many stories in Alexandria. Athanasius, fearing that the discussions and disputes which prevailed in Alexandria might have a bad influence on the mind of his young pupil, thought best to take him with him into the desert when he went on a visit to the abbot Pachomius. Pachomius willingly accepted the charge for a time; but, on further knowledge of the youth's character and disposition, he came to the conclusion that the rules of his monastery were somewhat too stern for one naturally given to an over-strict life; and he thought, moreover, that the ideas which the youth had derived from the study of Origen, quickened by an over-keen fancy, were likely to be too much fostered in the solitary life which was part of his discipline. He therefore thought good to send Telemachus to us that our milder rule, and the freer intercourse among the brethren which prevails here, might perhaps achieve the end aimed at by Athanasius, and wean him from too subtle speculation. But I know not how it is; though I love the youth much, and though no one is more readily obedient to our rule,

I sometimes feel as if there might be a work before him for which some other guide were fitter than I; wherefore I should be most grateful to you, my brother, if you would bring your learning and wisdom to his aid, and grant him the benefit of a wider experience than we can gain in Egyptian deserts."

Jerome consented to this proposal, and, feeling that he could more easily deal with the youth in private, decided to visit him in his own cell, which was in one of the caves on the side of the mountain, somewhat lower than the cell in which the Abbot had been entertaining his guests. When the elder monk entered the youth was seated on the ground mending the sheepskin in which he was usually attired; beside him stood another monk of about the same age, but whose fair hair and blue eyes betrayed a different race. He was watching the labour of his friend with an air of astonishment and some impatience; but when they saw their visitor both youths started, and Telemachus rose to his feet in some confusion.

"I have no wish to disturb your labours," said Jerome courteously, "but I have your abbot's permission to speak a few words with you, if you can spare me so much time."

"Certainly," replied Telemachus, and then added, turning to his friend, "We will speak of those matters, Eric, another time." Eric bowed silently and withdrew. Jerome seated himself, and remarked, "You have left the world early, my son. I understand that you came from the great city of Alexandria. Have you no longing to return there?"

Telemachus looked at the speaker in some surprise, not unmixed with terror; then he answered slowly, "I have tried, my Father, to resist that and all other temptations of the flesh; but, to say the truth, when I think of all that the holy Athanasius and others did in Alexandria I sometimes doubt whether it may not be also a temptation of the

Devil which makes me shrink from the work in the larger world that may lie before me."

"Then it is not wholly of Alexandria," said Jerome, "that you are thinking?"

"I have dreamed sometimes," replied the young monk, "of that older and greater city of which I have heard the holy Athanasius speak, where he found refuge and help in the time of his trouble, and for which he ever cherished a great fondness."

"Ah," said Jerome, "then it was that remembrance which made your face kindle so when I spoke of Rome to-day."

Telemachus blushed at this reference and said, looking down, "I fear I may have shown my feeling more plainly than was becoming to me."

"Nay, my son," answered Jerome kindly, "the physician must know the full symptoms of the disease, before he can cure it. Speak freely of the thoughts which my words produced in you."

"I thought, Father," said Telemachus, still looking on the ground, "that if the city to which we owe so much had now fallen into corruption and evil, we were bound in gratitude to do something to save it from its fall." He paused and glanced shyly at his visitor, evidently fearing rebuke for his audacity.

Jerome remained silent for a moment with his forehead knit in thought. Then he said, "When you speak of what we owe to Rome, are you thinking only of the services of Rome to Athanasius?"

"No, my Father," said the youth gently, "I was thinking of all the line of great thinkers and great actors who have made the name of Rome illustrious, and perchance prepared the way for the teaching of a higher faith."

"Ah, my son," said Jerome, "I know too well the temptation of this ancient learning. I can tell from

experience how, by the beauty of their words and the loftiness of their thoughts, these heathen writers can draw us away from the study of prophets and apostles, can make one even despise their style as rugged and unpolished; and so by these enticements they drag us back into that world which we fly into the desert to avoid. But surely it was not the holy bishop Athanasius who encouraged you in these studies?"

"I cannot remember," answered Telemachus, "that he ever spoke much with me on this subject. These thoughts have come to me at various times; and I think I was first guided to them by the writings of one of whom the holy bishop said that he had laboured much in the cause of the Church, and whose memory is still beloved in Alexandria."

"I thought as much," answered Jerome; "you mean the learned Origen."

The youth bowed. The elder monk paused for a moment in some embarrassment, and then proceeded: "It would ill become me to speak lightly of one who suffered in the cause of the Church, and to whose learning all who have studied the Scriptures owe so much; yet there are ideas which mislead even the wisest men; and there are some writers whom youths like you would do well to leave to those who know better how to distinguish the wheat from the chaff, and the delusions of fancy from the clear visions of the Spirit. And as for this dream of Rome, beware how you run headlong into temptation, and take upon yourself a work not meant for you." He paused for a moment, then, as if desirous of clinching his argument, he proceeded: "Do you know, my son, that men, aye and women too, who have inherited all these great traditions of which you speak; who are the heirs of the courage and generalship of the Scipios, of the eloquence of Cicero, and the statesmanship and

patriotism of the Gracchi, have been content to sacrifice all their inherited dignities and live, not as Roman nobles, but as poor servants of Christ?"

His eye kindled as he spoke, and seeing an answering enthusiasm in the face of his auditor he fancied that he had succeeded in producing the desired effect, so, pausing abruptly, he gave his blessing to the young monk and hastily left the cell.

Telemachus gazed after him with a strange and troubled expression. The last words of Jerome had to a great extent defeated the effect of his previous advice. The warning against rashness and audacity, and the tender, discriminating criticism on Origen, had tended at once to win the sympathy of Telemachus and to alarm his conscience about the lawfulness of his own desires; but, when he saw the face of Jerome kindle with the recollection of the tradition of the Scipios and Gracchi, his old sense of the fascination of the greatness of Rome revived within him; and it seemed to him that the memories of these great ancestors might have roused their descendants to the acts of self-sacrifice of which Jerome had spoken, rather than have hindered progress in the Christian life.

Fearing that such a fascination must be a temptation of the Devil, Telemachus endeavoured by prayer to rid himself of these thoughts; but the struggle was too great for a body exhausted already with fasting and labour, and he fell asleep. Even in sleep the visions of this strange great city haunted him, mingling partly with old recollections of Alexandria, partly shaping itself into new and fantastic forms, such as he had never seen in life; and over it all was the sense of a terrible doom impending, and of a power urging him on to speak and prophecy against the city; while at the same time a heavy weight oppressed him, choking his utterance and driving back the words which strove to force themselves to his lips. Then a crashing sound, as if

houses were falling in ruins, made him start to his feet; and he heard between waking and sleeping the chapel bell summoning him to midnight prayer. He rushed from his cave and hastened to the church, which was the centre of the group of cells that formed the monastery of Nitria. He seemed to find a momentary relief in joining energetically in the prayers and hymns with his brethren; but, happening to look up once in a pause in the service, he caught the eye of Jerome fixed upon him with a strange expression. It seemed to him a rebuke for the half-unconscious wandering of his thoughts; the old longing and the sense of its sinfulness came at the same time upon him, and he prayed all the more earnestly for the effort that it cost him to thrust back the visions.

## *CHAPTER II*

## *THE PARTING OF THE WAYS*

Pray in the darkness if thou hast no light.
HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

As Telemachus was sitting the next day in his cell, engaged in the weaving which had been assigned to him as his work in the convent, Eric entered, bearing on his shoulder the tools with which he was about to proceed to his work in the convent garden. He looked eager and excited, and struck his spade on the ground with an energy that made Telemachus start. "Ah, Telemachus," he said, "you have not come out to see these Romans start on their homeward journey. Look! they are even now descending the hill," and, stepping to the front of the cave, he pointed to the group which was slowly disappearing from sight.

"Nay, Eric," answered Telemachus, "I would rather pray that my eyes should be turned away from beholding vanity."

"Indeed!" said Eric with an astonished laugh. "Is it thus that you speak of these learned and reverend fathers? Know you not that the chief guest of our abbot was the learned Hieronymus, who hath translated the Scriptures into Latin, and whose fame as a guide and director of the conscience, especially of women, has gone out into the whole Christian world?"

"Peace be with him!" answered Telemachus calmly.

"He has given me much good advice; and yet he has raised in me such thoughts that I would fain never have seen him."

"He seems free with his good advice," answered Eric scornfully. "He ventured to speak slightingly to me of the holy Wulfila, who has done and suffered more for the cause of Christ than any Roman of them all, and who, as I hear, has now gone to his rest. And yet this arrogant Roman will have it that Wulfila is most likely in hell, because he held not with Athanasius and his followers about the 'One Substance.' So I told him that if Wulfila were in hell there would I go too. Whereat he looked terribly upon me and threatened to repeat my words to the Abbot. But let them not stir me too far; I have already grown weary of the life here; and since I hear that Athanaric, our persecutor, is dead, it may be that we who followed Wulfila may find means to return to our own country. And if that be impossible I can at worst go to Constantinople, for they say that the Goths are now strong enough there to secure fair words from the Emperor. Indeed, some of these monks speak of Theodosius as a friend of the Gothic race; and though I remember too well what came of the friendship of Valens to trust myself too far to Roman emperors, or their minions, yet I fully believe that we may now have a chance, such as we had not in former times, to shape for ourselves a freer life, dependent neither on Roman nor Greek."

Telemachus gazed at the speaker in alarm. "What!" said he. "Will you indeed risk your soul's salvation and return into the world of strife and luxury when you have found a resting-place from human persecutors and the temptations of the Devil in the Mount of the Saints?"

"Truly, my brother," answered Eric, "I thought and hoped for a while as you do; and you know that when I first came to the monastery none worked and obeyed the laws

better than I ; but I know not how it is, I seem to draw no closer here to the God whom we worship, rather I feel as if life here were wasted in prayers which are not answered and work which brings no result. For Greeks and Egyptians this life may have its uses, but we Goths are as much born to fight as those old Jews were. Yes, Telemachus, and to fight against enemies of flesh and blood, not against unsubstantial visions which men strive with here ! "

Telemachus looked at him with a strange appealing expression, unlike the glance with which he had received his first outburst. Then he turned away and murmured a prayer. The Goth returned the look with one in which affection and bewilderment were equally combined ; but before he could say more Abbot Pambo suddenly appeared at the entrance of the cell. " Eric," he said, " why are you lingering here ? Begone to your work ! I shall have something to say to you at a later time Come to me before the evening prayer."

Eric bowed and withdrew silently, but not without a look of vexation and anger. Pambo noticed it, but showed no sign of his feeling till the Goth had left them. Then he turned to Telemachus and said, " My son, the learned Hieronymus spoke to me of the matters about which he questioned you yesterday. I trust he has cured you of this wild desire after strange and difficult tasks in the sinful world."

" My Father," said Telemachus, " I have striven day and night against the temptation of which you speak. But if it be your will I would fain go yet farther into the desert, where perchance I may meet with such help as the blessed St. Anthony and St. Hilarion found in the more direct visitations of God and His saints and angels, and the solitary wrestlings with the Devil."

" Nay, my son," answered Pambo, " this too may be a temptation of spiritual pride. Be content rather with the

daily tasks prescribed you here, and with observing the pious lives of your brethren in this monastery. And if you have perchance fallen under the influence of some who have stirred up this discontent, because they are men of turbulent minds, I will take heed that they shall trouble you and us no further. But now tell me, my son, what has this wild fellow said to you, he, I mean, who went from us just now ?"

"Alas ! my Father, they were but hasty words of which he will doubtless soon repent."

"I trust so, my son," answered the Abbot ; "but that is between him and God. Your duty is to answer what I have asked you."

Then Telemachus slowly and reluctantly repeated the words of the Goth. Pambo listened with compressed lips, but without any other sign of feeling, and simply said, "I will speak with him this evening. Proceed with your work, my son." He then left the cell.

The interview between the Abbot and Eric at once brought matters to a crisis ; and when Telemachus awoke on the morrow from the few hours of sleep which monastic discipline allowed him, he saw the Goth again standing beside him. A kind of fierce joy was on his face as he called his friend to rise and greet him. "This life," he said, "is over for me at last. The Abbot has thrust me forth from the monastery ; he would fain have prevented my taking leave of any of the brethren, and particularly of you ; but, when I said that I should certainly let you hear in some way of my departure, he yielded, saying that it might be a warning rather than a temptation to you."

"But what," asked Telemachus, "is your offence, and why has your expulsion been so hastily decided upon ?"

Eric laughed. "Those are scarce the questions of an obedient monk," he answered. "Perchance after all I may serve rather as an example than a warning."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Telemachus, stepping back, and crossing himself. "Nor do I desire to know aught that our abbot would conceal from me. But if he wishes that your fate should serve as a warning he must mean me to know what that warning is."

"Well argued," answered Eric; "though perhaps scarcely according to the rules of monkish logic. My sin is no greater nor less than I told you yesterday—a desire to return to my own people, and a refusal to listen to the abuse which these holy monks would pour upon him who led us to the truth."

"But," said Telemachus, "to whom would you return? They say you cannot live elsewhere the holy life which you lead in these deserts. And if you return to the Goths do you not fall among the persecutors again?"

"Did I not tell you that Athanaric is dead?" answered Eric, "and that there is a new chance for the Goths at Constantinople under the Emperor Theodosius?"

"Constantinople!" repeated Telemachus slowly. "Heard you not what those brethren told us who came but a week ago from thence? That the life is even grosser and more corrupt than in Rome itself; with none of those great traditions of the past which may keep alive some nobleness in Rome."

Eric smiled again, "I know too much of those Roman traditions of nobleness and what they produce." He paused for a moment, and a dark shade crossed his face. Then he added with a smile, "That was scarce a speech for a monk, Telemachus."

Telemachus flushed and crossed himself again. Then he eagerly betook himself to his weaving in order to distract his thoughts from the fancies which came before him. Eric watched him for a moment in silence; then he went on more eagerly:

'But think not that I shall remain long in that effeminate

city. The leaders of the Goths will doubtless have work of a very different kind for their followers, and in some new warlike expedition we shall be safe enough from the corruptions of Greeks and Romans."

"War!" exclaimed Telemachus aghast. "Is that work for a Christian man, Eric? Said you not that your holy Wulfila tried to wean the Goths from their love of war and bloodshed?"

"True!" replied Eric. "And while I thought that these monks were such as he, I was content to live here; for I love these corrupt cities as little as you do; but it seems to me nobler work to meet your enemies in fair fight than to invent tortures for them in another world because they think not with you."

"To invent them!" said Telemachus with an accent of horror. "Why even Origen, who is so much condemned for his gentleness towards heathens, and for his hopes of future deliverance for the whole race of man, admitted that all sinners must suffer hereafter, till their sins are purged away."

"The more need to live a vigorous and happy life here," answered the Goth. "Farewell, my friend. I leave you to your dreams. You may yet hear more of me hereafter." And with a joyful shout he turned away and hastened down the hill.

Telemachus gazed after him, half longing to call him back, and yet feeling as if the departure of his friend relieved him from an old and pressing temptation. With a sigh, which he could not wholly explain, he turned again to his work, and hoped by the energy of physical exertion to dull the new longings in his heart. But the weaving was not of itself exhausting enough to distract his mind from its confusions; rather it seemed as if it chimed in with and encouraged the dreams which were presenting themselves so vividly—of a strange new world, which was yet like the

old one that he had never wholly forgotten ; and the very sense of the evil of the outer world, and of the dangers of his friend, stirred in him some belief and hope of a mission that should be granted to him for the destruction of that evil and the removal of those dangers. Then to discipline his thoughts yet further he sang the following hymn :

Thee, the immortal only ruler,
Grant me power to praise and hymn Thee ;
Hail Thee King and mightiest master !
'Tis thro' Thee the sun is shining ;
Thine the moon's course in the heavens ;
Thine the stars' unequalled beauty ;
'Tis thro' Thee man learns to reason,
Learns to think the thoughts of Godhead ;
He alone with reason gifted ;
For Thou hast created all things,
Giving each its place and order,
Binding all things by Thy foresight ;
Spok'st the word, the work was finished.
For Thy Word is God the Son ;
For Thy equal He in substance ;
Equal He with His begetter ;
He all things harmonious welded,
That He so might reign o'er all things.
He, the Godhead's Holy Spirit,
For His wisdom guardeth all things.
Holy Triad ever living !
I will hail Thee one in power
Without change, without beginning ;
Nature that no words can utter ;
Widom past our human effort ;
Strength of heavens unshakeable,
Without ending or beginning,
Ray of light That none can gaze on !
Gazing Thou on all Thou madest !
Whom no depth of depths escapeth
In the earth or the abysses ;
Father be Thou gracious to me !
Still to serve and do Thee honour
Grant me ever and in all things !

Cast my sins in mercy from Thee!
Cleanse my mind from evil thinking
That I may give God the glory,
Holding up pure hands in worship;
That I may pay Christ my homage,
And on bended knee beseech Him
Then to take me as His servant,
When He cometh to His Kingdom.
Father! be Thou gracious to me!
Grace and mercy I shall find them;
Grace and glory still be paid Thee,
Ever thro' uncounted ages![1]

Either the words or the effort to raise his thoughts into a spirit of devotion seemed to distract him from the painful confusions with which he had been struggling, and he worked, for a time, in a more passive frame of mind, murmuring at intervals, half mechanically, some snatches of the hymn which he had just sung. But when the bell for the noonday service struck on his ears, and he roused himself to go to the chapel, he could not fail to recall the absence of the friend who used to accompany him, a memory which was quickened in him as he passed Eric's empty cell, and which came back to him with still greater force as he noted his vacant place in the chapel. All through the service something seemed to be repeating Eric's words, "You may yet hear more of me hereafter." The longings for the bolder life of action, the sense of some special duty to his friend, the memories of Jerome's words about the corruptions of Rome, all tended to confuse his thoughts, and once or twice he feared that he had mingled with prayer or hymn some words betraying what was passing in his mind. Then he started guiltily, thinking that one of the brothers had observed him, and he threw himself more eagerly into his prayers. As he left the chapel, he saw the Abbot's eye fixed on him, and he blushed at the

[1] Translated from a hymn by Gregory of Nasianzus.

thought that his wanderings of mind might have been guessed at. Again he tried by work and song to drive away the strange thoughts; but when he lay down at night the trouble had not ceased. Then, as he passed out of consciousness, there rose before him a strange scene. He seemed at first to be again in the chapel surrounded by monks; but, as he looked and listened, the place grew larger and changed into a hall which was familiar to him, he knew not why. All round him were men and women, some of them richly dressed, and many beautiful, all gazing intently at one figure who was addressing them; but Telemachus could not hear what he said. Unconsciously he pressed close, partly to hear the words, but much more from a vague desire of eliciting sympathy from the speaker. Then suddenly the figure turned to him, and he knew, though he could not have told why, that it was Origen. A strange look of suffering was on his face as though he was undergoing some unknown torture; and he said, looking at Telemachus, yet half speaking to himself, "Let us struggle to take up perfectly, not only the open martyrdom, but that which is in secret."[1]—Then the vision slowly vanished and Telemachus sank into a refreshing sleep till the bell roused him for the midnight service.

When Telemachus went to the Abbot in the morning he found him reading a letter, with a messenger standing by. As Telemachus entered, Pambo looked up with a confused manner; then he returned for a few minutes to the perusal of the letter, and afterwards gave a few hurried directions in Egyptian. As soon as the messenger had left the room, the Abbot turned to Telemachus and looked long and earnestly at him before speaking. At last he said, laying his hand on the youth's head, "My son, it was well for you that the learned Hieronymus came hither;

[1] *Μὴ τὸ ἐν φανερῷ μόνον μαρτύριον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐν κρυπτῷ τελείως ἀναλαβεῖν ἀγωνισώμεθα.*

he seems to have taken much note of you. But I fear that the longing against which he warned you has not wholly left you."

"Ah, my Father," answered Telemachus sadly, "I would gladly tear it out of my heart if it be of the Devil; but there seems sometimes a strange thought of a mission to be accomplished, for——" he broke off. He longed to speak of Eric, but, remembering the abrupt sternness of Pambo's tone in referring to the Goth, he dared not utter his name.

"Do not think, my son," answered Pambo gently, "that I do not know these longings. I doubt, indeed, whether this temptation can be wholly conquered in this life; rather may it be borne as the thorn in the flesh of which the apostle speaks; but, as for the mission of which you speak, some clearer sign would have been given you, had it been the will of God that you should leave this place; but you do not speak of any clear vision of this kind." He paused, and looked at the young monk.

Telemachus hesitated a moment. He had never concealed from Pambo his continual study of Origen, and the Abbot had never rebuked him for it, while one or two of the older monks had seemed to sympathize with his feeling. But, on the other hand, he remembered that Athanasius had sometimes warned him of the danger of following that study too far; and Jerome's anxious tones when he spoke on the subject still dwelt in his memory. Moreover, in the struggles of mind which had preceded and followed his entrance into the monastery, as well as in the more recent struggle of the last two days, the thought of Origen, both as a man and teacher, had become specially dear to him. Hence he shrank from speaking of his vision as he might have shrunk from reference to a dead parent in the presence of someone who knew nothing of him. Yet the sense of monastic obedience, and a desire for a clearer

light, compelled him to speak ; and he described the vision which he had seen, only speaking of the principal figure as one who seemed to be a martyr and a saint.

Pambo listened gravely, and answered : "Surely, my son, this is in itself a sign that you are not yet called to testify to Christ before the world. Bear your burdens here awhile, and when the call comes think not that I shall hinder you from obeying it."

## *CHAPTER III*

# *AN ABBOT'S DIFFICULTIES*

"Who is't can read a woman?"

SHAKESPEARE.

MUCH as Pambo was troubled by the difficulties of Telemachus there were other vexations around him, which were far more disturbing to the ordinary course of monastic life. Against his will Pambo had been persuaded by Jerome to allow Melaneia to remain for a short time as a guest of the monastery, after the other visitors had departed to Palestine.

The truth was that Jerome had, in some measure, consulted his own convenience, as well as the wishes of Melaneia, in this proposal. The seeds of the quarrel, which afterwards rose to such bitter heights between the great teacher and his former pupil, were doubtless sown already in those differences of temperament which naturally separated the capricious and wilful beauty from the shrewd and thoughtful ecclesiastic. To Jerome the passionate devotion of the Eastern monks was an object rather of admiration than of sympathy. Monasticism was not really suited to his character; and the period of his life which he had passed in the desert was rather an unnatural excrescence on his career than a regular stage of his development.

Like all the wisest Christians of his time he looked to the Egyptian and Syrian deserts as the source of the great purifying element which was to save Christian life from

perishing in the corruptions which gathered round the courts of Rome and Constantinople. But, unlike most of the leaders of the Church, he seems to have drawn little strength or purification for himself from his own experience of the monastic life. The shrewd wisdom that is often to be found in his letters must rather have been learned among the experience of ordinary life than in the retirement of the desert, while the hatred of secular learning, the fierce rage against the followers of Origen, and the strange materialism which gradually coloured the whole of his theology, seemed rather to indicate the effect which monasticism would produce on a mind ill-fitted to profit by it—a striking contrast to its inspiring and ennobling influence on those who were suited to receive its training.

To Melaneia this attitude of mind was utterly repugnant. To her the stern rebukes of Pambo were more welcome than the shrewd and humorous criticisms of Jerome. The strain of worldliness and vanity in her was more irritated and provoked by the colder observation of one who was not untouched by worldliness himself than by the holy horror of the Abbot from whom these things were utterly remote. The frivolous life of Rome, and the passionate devotion of the monks of Nitria, could each appeal to different parts of her nature; but the tendency to combine, or to compromise between these forms of excitement, was utterly alien from her. Hence it was with a sense of mutual relief that she parted from Jerome and Paula, and decided to remain at Nitria.

Pambo, as I have said, consented very reluctantly to this arrangement; but he was noted for the hesitation and deliberation with which he arrived at conclusions, whether in questions of action or speculation; and a man of such disposition could offer but feeble resistance to the sturdy self-confidence of Jerome and the passionate zeal of Melaneia. She remained, therefore, a tenant, for a time, of the guest-

room, an object of intense anxiety to Pambo, who was divided between fear for the discipline of his monks, the monastic dislike and distrust of women, and a dread lest here too he should be quenching a desire in any soul for a higher light. This unwelcome guest, however, did her best to relieve his anxiety. She conformed carefully to the restrictions laid on her by Pambo, and attempted no intercourse with the other monks ; but it was unavoidable that they should catch sight of her sometimes as she moved about the hill, and questionings and wonder would arise, of which Pambo was conscious, though they did not reach his ears by any direct communications.

There was one, indeed, of the elder monks who had so much influence with Pambo who ventured occasionally to warn him of the effect which such a breach of monastic custom might produce, especially on the minds of the younger monks ; but the duty of hospitality and the awe inspired by Jerome's reputation outweighed for the time in Pambo's mind the hints of Ammonius, though those hints added much to the anxiety and perplexity of the poor Abbot.

Telemachus, absorbed in his own thoughts and struggles, had paid little attention to the gossip of his fellow-monks. Indeed, since the departure of Eric, he had lived that separate hermit life which was permitted to those monks of Nitria who did not desire to share their cells with their brethren. Thus he gradually withdrew more and more from intercourse with all, save a few of the elder monks, among whom the above-mentioned Ammonius was most conspicuous. He shared and encouraged the admiration of Telemachus for Origen ; and this bond naturally drew together, for a time, two men, who were in many respects singularly unlike each other. From Ammonius he was not likely to hear much of idle gossip, and he was therefore unaware that either of the strange women who had so

suddenly appeared at Nitria was still remaining on the mountain.

It was, therefore, with a shock of horror that, on returning one evening to his cell, he saw, standing outside the guest-room, the figure of a graceful and beautiful woman. With the natural instinct of a monk he started and crossed himself, an act which he repeated with still more fervour when he saw that the woman's looks were evidently fixed on him with considerable interest. He started off with a run to his cell; and, having vainly endeavoured to remove the vision from his mind by devotion, he hastened to the Abbot, and entreated him to use upon him the scourge which was sometimes employed to correct disobedient monks.

Pambo listened with much distress; but, guessing at the truth, he declined to have recourse to the remedy suggested by Telemachus; assured him that the vision would disappear; and in the meantime dispatched him on a distant errand. But the circumstance disturbed the Abbot, more than so ordinary an incident in monastic experience would have seemed likely to do. He had realized that Telemachus was occupied with things which did not generally trouble the mind of the ordinary monk, and had therefore hoped that those evil dreams, which so often attacked the diseased imagination of his flock, would have been spared to one so exceptional.

Pambo, therefore, roused himself under the new pressure of duty, shook off the hesitation which had hindered him from performing what he felt to be necessary, and at once went to Melaneia to entreat her to depart elsewhere. Melaneia was startled and impressed by the unusually authoritative tone of the Abbot, and she consented to return for a time to Bethlehem; only entreating that, if Pambo should find any service that she could perform, he would at once send her a message to that effect.

So she departed from the monastery in which things

rapidly resumed their ordinary course. Telemachus, on his part, devoted himself with more energy than ever to the labours of the convent, fearing that this vision had been sent as a punishment for his ambitious thoughts, or, perhaps, as a warning of the evils of that world into which he had so rashly wished to enter.

## *CHAPTER IV*

# *A TURBULENT BISHOP*

"Man! proud man!
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep."

SHAKESPEARE.

ABOUT seven years had passed since the events mentioned in the last chapter. Telemachus, like so many of his time, had lived a life which to outsiders would have seemed intolerably monotonous, but which to him was full of the most exciting and vivid experience. The longings, which he thought to have crushed out, had often returned, though he tried to hold them in check by a sturdy exertion of the will; and they had been much quickened by the news of the revolt of the Goths, which so soon followed the death of Theodosius, and the unwise change of policy of Arcadius. That Eric had distinguished himself in the army of Alaric, and had gained the confidence of his leader, was made known at Nitria as quickly as the methods of communication would allow; and Telemachus felt, on the one hand, increased pain at the life of lawless warfare to which his friend was committed, and, on the other hand, a sense of the hopelessness of attempting to separate him from such a life, at least while Alaric continued in a career of success. Moreover, to those of the monks who had time and thought for such matters, the preservation of the Empire, in spite of all its

corruption, seemed the best chance for preserving the Christian Church; and the victory of the Gothic race, half of whom were heathen and half Arians, seemed a danger to be prayed and struggled against by all true believers. But while, for his friend's salvation and the world's, Telemachus desired the defeat of the Goths, the longing to see Eric again, and to restore him to a noble life, pressed on him with ever increasing intensity.

Strange rumours in the meantime had reached Nitria of the growing bitterness between Jerome's little colony at Bethlehem and the Bishop of Jerusalem; and some fragments of the controversy between Jerome and Ruffinus had been repeated in a confused manner by occasional visitors to the monastery. Telemachus, indeed, had paid little attention to these stories; and he would have been very far from guessing that a personal contest between men who seemed so far removed from his life would have a powerful effect in precipitating the accomplishment of that work after which he was dimly feeling.

Early one morning, as Pambo was sitting reading at the entrance to his cell, he observed an old man slowly toiling up the mountain towards him. His head and face were muffled as if to escape observation, but, as his cloak fell back in his struggles to ascend the mountain, Pambo observed that he wore the dress of a priest. The Abbot hastened towards him, and offered him his assistance in climbing the hill. Finding him completely exhausted by his journey, he took him to the guest-chamber of the monastery, and set before him such refreshment as monastic rule would permit. The old man slowly recovered himself; and, fixing his eyes on Pambo, he said, "I think I recognize your voice, though I cannot recall your face or name."

"I am Pambo," replied the Abbot, "the unworthy guardian of this monastery."

"Pambo!" repeated the old priest slowly. "You were

but a youth when we last met, and you have doubtless long forgotten one who left this quiet home to plunge into the troubles of the world. I am Isidorus who was trained here in his youth, and who comes hither to seek refuge in his despised old age."

"The holy Isidorus!" exclaimed Pambo. "Everyone who comes to us from Alexandria testifies to your zeal for the faith, and to the estimation in which you are held throughout that great city. Even the heathen, they say, have confidence in your justice, and honour the nobleness and justice of your life."

Isidorus smiled bitterly. "By the heathen, my brother, it may be that I am honoured; 'tis by the rulers of the Christian Church that I have been cast out."

"What!" said Pambo. "Has Theophilus——" he paused. The sense of discipline and reverence for authority made it repugnant to him to speak evil to a priest of his bishop; but the bad fame of Theophilus had reached even to the recesses of the monastery of Nitria, and, when Isidorus spoke of the tyranny of the rulers of the Church, the mind of Pambo naturally recurred to the unscrupulous and self-seeking bishop who ruled over the Church of Alexandria.

"Yes," answered Isidorus, "Theophilus has condemned me unheard; condemned me as guilty of a crime" (he shuddered) "of which it does not become us even to speak. And as for the motives which have led him to this act, and the manner in which he has obtained his evidence, may God judge between him and me! I care not to speak even to you of what I have heard. But I come to you now to find refuge in this monastery until the tyranny be overpast."

"You are welcome in God's name, my brother," answered Pambo; "and we will give you instantly such rest and comfort as your age requires."

"Nay, Father Abbot!" answered Isidorus. "I ask nothing better than to fare even as the poorest of your brotherhood."

"Then must you submit to the discipline of the monastery," replied Pambo with a smile. "We have here good provision for the sick and aged; and while we hold that all should mortify the body we suffer not any to destroy it, nor yet to make it a useless servant of the spirit." Pambo then summoned a monk to conduct the old man to the room which was set apart for the sick and aged monks, and to desire Brother Ammonius to come to him.

Ammonius was a few years older than the Abbot, and much respected in the monastery for his learning and devotion to the monastic life, a devotion which he had signally proved by even cutting off one of his ears to prevent his exaltation to a bishopric and removal from the solitude of the desert. The strength of will, proved by this act, could be read in the strong lines of the mouth, which suggested the reason why the more hesitating Pambo was inclined to rely on his counsel in emergencies.

Pambo was walking up and down his cell as the elder monk entered; and he remained silent and troubled for a few minutes before he could make up his mind how best to expound his difficulties. Then he said, "It seems, Brother Ammonius, as if our stay in this monastery were in some way unpleasing to God and the saints. Ever since that strange invasion of women, some seven years ago, my mind has been troubled with the thought that a judgment was intended against us. I know, my brother, that you held that I acted weakly in that matter; and it may be you judged aright, but the punishment which was long delayed seems waiting us now."

He then hastily told Ammonius all the story of Isidorus, and then paused, looking steadily at him as if waiting for an answer. As Ammonius did not reply, Pambo said

somewhat impatiently, "What is your counsel in this strait, my brother?"

"What have you done with Isidorus, my Father?" asked Ammonius.

"I have placed him in the hospital for the aged and infirm, and hope to secure rest and protection to him there, at least for a time. But think you that Theophilus will leave us long in peace? And if not, have we the right to risk the safety of the monastery, or to embroil ourselves with this ambitious man?"

"But I need not ask, my Father," said Ammonius, "if you would counsel the surrender of the fugitive to Theophilus?"

"God forbid, my brother!" answered Pambo hastily. "But yet it is my duty to save my flock from the struggles of the world, and to bow in all things lawful to the authority of our rulers."

"Does Theophilus know that Isidorus has fled to our convent?" said Ammonius.

"He can scarcely know it as yet," replied the Abbot.

"Then," said Ammonius, "let us not anticipate dangers. Your wisdom has already decided to receive Isidorus into the convent; and the only further counsel that I should give would be to prohibit any of the brethren, especially any of the younger ones, from going in the direction of Alexandria at least for a month from this time. God and the saints can guard their own, and they may yet bring these matters to a happy end."

Pambo gave a sigh of relief, and cordially thanked Ammonius for his advice. Then, as soon as the old monk had departed, he hastened to the hospital to which Isidorus had been removed. As he entered he met a monk, named Theodorus, coming out. The monk made a low obeisance; and Pambo said, "Have you been visiting our guest and preparing the comforts necessary for him?"

"Yes," answered Theodorus; "he seems much in need of help."

"Yet," said Pambo, "it would be well to mention his coming to as few of the brethren as possible; and I desire that none should go forth to Alexandria, whatever their business may be, till I give permission."

Theodorus bowed again and left the hospital. As soon as he was at a little distance, he paused, and glanced round him cautiously. Then he stood for a few moments in thought, and finally set off at a sharp walk down the hill in the direction of Telemachus's cell.

Telemachus was sitting engaged in his usual task of weaving, but glancing from time to time at a papyrus roll beside him. He looked up with some surprise as Theodorus entered, and answered his greeting in a cold and constrained tone. Theodorus appeared to take no notice of his manner, but at once began:

"Brother Telemachus, you have doubtless heard of the command which our holy father has issued that we should none of us go forth to Alexandria, except by special permission."

"I had not heard it," answered Telemachus; "but it concerns me little, as my work does not take me in that direction, nor has our Father Abbot often dispatched me on errands to such a distant point."

"But perchance," suggested Theodorus, "he might have errands, even for you, in that direction, which you would doubtless be glad to perform."

"Certainly!" replied Telemachus. "I should be willing enough to do whatever our Father Abbot should wish; but I know not why you should think that I should care more to go to Alexandria than elsewhere."

"Was it not," asked Theodorus, "from Alexandria that the messenger came lately with news from your friend the Goth, who fled so strangely from this monastery?"

"It was," replied Telemachus after a moment's thought; "but I know not where Eric may be now, nor have I any communication to send to him."

"Ah! you have rejected him then as an obstinate heretic," said Theodorus.

"God forbid!" exclaimed Telemachus with sudden energy. "I trust I judge no man so uncharitably."

"Then perchance you are studying how best to recall him to the faith," persisted Theodorus, glancing as he spoke at the roll which lay by Telemachus's side. "May I see what passage of Scripture you are choosing for meditation?"

Telemachus's face flushed, and he looked uneasily at his questioner and then at the papyrus. Theodorus left the place where he was seated and came nearer to Telemachus. "Ah," he said, "it is Origen's *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*. Do not men say that Origen is tainted with heresy? Nay, that there are even traces of Arianism in him?"

"I know not who they are that say so," answered Telemachus; "but thou knowest, Theodorus, that there were followers of Origen among those whom the heretic Emperor Valens expelled from this monastery for their firmness to the Catholic faith, and as for Origen himself——" He paused abruptly, and continued weaving without further speech.

Theodorus looked at him with some surprise, and repeated, "And as for Origen himself——?"

Telemachus again remained silent for a few minutes; then, seeing his questioner's eye fixed upon him, he said in a tone in which anger and vexation were evidently struggling with habitual self-command:

"Brother Theodorus, why do you come hither to trouble me with these things?"

"I came hither in all friendliness," replied Theodorus, "hoping to make easy the burden which our holy Abbot in

his wisdom has laid upon us; but you seem disposed to treat me, without cause, as your enemy. You should pray to be delivered, Brother, from this distrustful and uncharitable spirit." And with this pious injunction Theodorus rose and left the cell.

Telemachus's conscience had been startled by the last suggestion, and he endeavoured to follow the recommendation of Theodorus; but finding that the suspicions did not flee he returned again to his work, and tried by renewed physical exertion to get rid of the recollection of the recent interview.

In the meantime, Isidorus had been gradually persuaded to grant to Ammonius the confidence which he had at first withheld from Pambo. Ammonius and Isidorus had, indeed, been acquainted of old, and had worked together by the side of Athanasius in his days of trouble. By appealing to these memories, Ammonius had persuaded his old friend to disburden his mind of his troubles; and the story which he told was a sufficiently startling one.

Isidorus, as Pambo had said, had gained much credit among the Alexandrians for his justice and wisdom; and many who desired to help their neighbours preferred him to other priests as the medium of assistance. On one occasion a lady had brought him a sum of money which she intended for the clothing of the poor women of Alexandria. She entreated him, however, not to let Theophilus know of the matter; for if he were to claim any right of interference in it, she believed that he would insist that the money should partly go in building. Isidorus accepted the duty imposed on him, and spent the money in the manner required by its donor. Theophilus obtained information of the matter, apparently by means of spies; and, summoning Isidorus before him, asked him if the facts were as stated. No sooner had Isidorus admitted the fact than Theophilus suddenly produced a paper, which he said he had received

twenty years before, charging Isidorus with a horrible crime. Isidorus demanded to be confronted with his accuser. Theophilus answered that he was away at sea ; but, unable to resist Isidorus's demand for further inquiry, he dismissed him for a time.

Not long after, Isidorus heard from the Governor of the province that a boy had confessed that he had been bribed by Theophilus to support the horrible charge to which the bishop had referred. Theophilus, finding that the plot had failed, summarily removed Isidorus from his church without further explanation ; and it was this arbitrary act which had convinced Isidorus that he was no longer safe in Alexandria, and had induced him to take refuge in the monastery that he had known of old.

Pambo was deeply impressed by this story, and he took long and frequent counsel with Ammonius on the question of the ultimate disposal of their guest. For the time, however, they were agreed that the only course open to them was to guard him as safely and secretly as possible, since his condition did not allow of any further journey. They were the more alarmed at discovering that Theodorus, in whom they had been obliged to repose so much confidence, had suddenly left the convent. But before they could decide whether it was desirable to make further search for the missing monk the question was settled for them by the appearance of new actors on the scene.

One day, while Ammonius was sitting with Isidorus, he was again summoned to the presence of Pambo. Two priests in full canonicals were standing by the Abbot. Pambo's face was sorely troubled as he turned to Ammonius.

" Brother," he said, " the danger which we feared has come ; and yet I scarce understand it even now. Theophilus writes that we should send him, without fail, certain monks who are accused of heresy, and of resisting the lawful authority entrusted to him as bishop ; but he does not

specify who are the monks so charged, nor yet what the nature of the heresy or the resistance to his power may be. Nor do his messengers seem to be better informed as to his wishes."

"I think, Reverend Father," said one of the priests, "that the bishop has been warned that someone, who has fled from his power, has taken refuge in this monastery."

Pambo and Ammonius looked at each other. Then the latter said, "Father Abbot, let me and one or two of the brethren, whom I shall choose, go down to Alexandria and hear the truth of this matter."

"Nay, brother," answered Pambo, "if there is danger, it is fitting that I go."

"Pardon me, my Father," answered Ammonius, "I said not that there was danger; but I think that if the monastery were left without its head at such a time wolves might creep in unawares among the flock. Moreover, I am well known in Alexandria, and I see no reason to think that Theophilus has aught against me. Let me, therefore, choose two trusty brethren from our monastery, and we will go down to see what Theophilus has against us. It may be that his ear has been abused by foolish tales, and that we can make all well without much difficulty."

Pambo reluctantly consented to this proposal, and Ammonius with two other monks departed for Alexandria.

About a fortnight later, as Pambo was working in the garden of the monastery, he saw two monks slowly ascending the hill, bearing a litter between them. Alarmed and anxious he hastened down to meet them; he speedily recognized the foremost monk, and asked for Ammonius.

"He is within the litter," replied the monk. "He was so badly bruised and shaken that he could not walk more than a small part of the way."

Pambo eagerly asked what had happened, and what entertainment they had received from Theophilus.

"Truly," replied the monk, "he seems rather like some heathen tyrant than a Christian bishop. He received us, indeed, in great state, with his presbyters and deacons around him; but no sooner had Brother Ammonius begun to speak, and to ask with what he and his brethren were charged that they were summoned so peremptorily to Alexandria, than the face of Theophilus suddenly changed, so that he seemed more like a wild beast than a man; and springing from his couch he rushed upon Ammonius, and, striking him violently in the face, exclaimed, 'Heretic, anathematize Origen!' It was with difficulty that he could be plucked off Ammonius, whom we carried exhausted and bleeding from the bishop's house. Indeed, were it not that Ammonius is known in Alexandria, and that there were many there who honour the monks of Nitria, it is believed that Theophilus would have detained us by force, and done yet further violence to us all."

"This is passing strange," said Pambo. "But bear Ammonius to the hospital, and, when he has had time to rest, I will speak further with him on the matter."

The monks obeyed, and Pambo returned heavy-hearted to his cell, wondering within himself what sin of his had brought this vengeance on the flock under his charge. A monk soon after came to inform him that Ammonius was sufficiently recovered to be able to see and speak with him. Pambo hastened to his friend, who repeated to him much of the story which he had already heard from the other monk. The Abbot listened attentively, and then, turning to the brother who stood by Ammonius, asked him if he had been able to glean in Alexandria any explanation of this extraordinary scene.

"The more strange," added Pambo, "that I have heard Theophilus himself was counted as a follower of Origen."

"And *that*," replied the monk, "is even, as I could

gather, the chief cause of his rage. It seems that some fierce preacher had denounced the learned Hieronymus for having seemed to sanction the writings of Origen. This so startled that learned father that he hath become more fierce than ever against the heresies of Origen ; and he stirred up Theophilus to inquire diligently into these heresies, taxing him, as I hear, with too great leniency in the matter, if not with sympathy with the heretic. Now the power and influence of Hieronymus seems greatly to have grown in the Church, and Theophilus hath ever desired to stand well with those who are in power. Moreover, he is mightily jealous of the new Patriarch of Constantinople ; for, indeed, he had hoped to have been elected Patriarch in his place, and plotted much to hinder the election of John. Now John is reputed by some to be a favourer of the teaching of Origen ; and this hath stirred Theophilus up to yet fiercer action in this matter."

"Then," said Pambo, "it is to be feared that the matter will not end here, but that we shall hear more of this turbulent bishop."

"Most true, Father," answered the monk, "and, what is worse, I saw among those in attendance on Theophilus, Brother Theodorus, who so lately fled from our monastery, and who, they say, has been daily with Theophilus since that time."

As he spoke Isidorus entered the room. He at once went up to Pambo, who was still standing in distressed thought looking down on the couch where Ammonius was lying. "My Father," he said, "it is useless for me to remain longer here, I am but bringing danger upon you and your monks. Let me return to Alexandria and take whatever Theophilus may inflict upon me."

"God forbid, my brother," answered Pambo, "that we should give you up as a prey to this wicked and cruel man. Your flight from here would now but bring shame on our

monastery, and I doubt if it would save us from the attacks of Theophilus."

"Most assuredly it would not," said Ammonius, raising himself on his elbow, and speaking with his old decision. "Whatever hatred Theophilus may have conceived against us for sheltering Isidorus from his vengeance, his mind is now set on far other things. He wishes to win fame and promotion in the Church as an exterminator of heresy; and he has heard that there are followers of Origen among the monks of Nitria. Hieronymus, as you have heard, is urging him on to action; and he will never rest until he has struck some blow which will startle the world and call attention to his zeal for the Church. I therefore counsel that we keep guard on all sides of our monastery, that we may be warned if any large body of men are seen to be approaching; and also that some of the brethren, who can be thoroughly trusted with such an office, should be sent to watch the ways from Alexandria, lest Theophilus come upon us unawares."

"It is good," said Pambo; "what further we may decide hereafter let us leave to the occasion as it shall arise; but let us pray earnestly that we may have strength to suffer martyrdom in the cause of Christ and the Saints."

## *CHAPTER V*

# *A TIME OF TROUBLE*

"And, having done all, to stand."
*St. Paul to the Ephesians.*

THE next week was passed in painful anxiety by many of the leading members of the monastery. Pambo, indeed, always so hesitating and troubled when a decision had to be made, became calm, happy, and even vigorous in preparing to meet a danger which he knew no action of his could avoid. Monks were sent out, as had been suggested, to watch the country in the direction of Alexandria; and Telemachus, who was always eager for this kind of physical exertion, was active in carrying out Pambo's orders in the matter. At last, when more than a week had passed and the more sanguine were beginning to hope that the danger was over, some of the scouts descried in the distance a dark cloud of dust, from which there slowly emerged some armed horsemen. The messengers turned at once and hastened back to the monastery. Pambo called some of the leading monks together, and hastily consulted what was best to be done. Again Isidorus urged that he should be delivered up, or suffered to go his way in peace. Pambo and Ammonius alike protested against this proposal; but the latter suggested that he and Isidorus and one of the other monks, against whom Theophilus was supposed to be specially indignant, should make their way to Memphis. As it was thought, after deliberation, that it was too late in the day to begin the journey, they decided to conceal

themselves in a dried-up well till daybreak, when they hoped to be able to escape by descending the south side of the mountain to the lake, and either skirting its shores, or, if a boat could be procured, crossing to the opposite side of the lake and thence making their way to Memphis.

"And for yourself, Holy Father," said Isidorus, "what provision do you intend to make?"

"I know not that Theophilus means aught against my person," said Pambo. "If he finds that Isidorus has escaped him, he may indeed be angry; but he cannot blame us for receiving those who take refuge in this monastery; and as for these so-called heresies of Origen, they have never yet been condemned by any Council of the Church. Nor have I ever thought it my duty to declare my opinion on one side or the other. The horsemen from Alexandria can scarce reach us before to-morrow. Let us meet as usual for the morning Eucharist."

Telemachus and another monk were directed to carry provisions, and to show the three fugitives to their place of hiding, which was at the extreme end of Mount Nitria. The old well was in a grove of palm-trees, and the stone which covered it was too much overgrown to be easily discovered. While Telemachus was fastening a rope to one of the trees he heard a rustling noise, like the sound of retreating footsteps. He looked round anxiously, but could see no one. With some difficulty the stone was removed; Isidorus, Ammonius, and the other monk were let down into the well, and a basket of provisions and skin of water lowered to them. Then the stone was moved only partially over the opening so as to allow of air, and the rest of the opening was concealed by long sprays of tangled plants. Telemachus and his companion then returned to their cells, promising to come at daybreak to release their friends.

Shortly before dawn one of the monks, who had been

on the watch, came hastening up the hill to announce that a body of soldiers, led on by a bishop in full robes, was approaching. Pambo was already on his way to the chapel, and, smiling calmly at the news, he ordered the brethren to attend him at the service. The monks all flocked hastily into the church, the calmness of their leader increasing their desire to cling close to him, though it could not destroy the sense that something strange and terrible was at hand. The tramp of the soldiers sounded nearer and nearer as one of the young monks, who stood by Pambo, called on those about to receive the sacrament to give each other the kiss of peace. The embrace was, perhaps, somewhat warmer than usual from the sense of approaching danger ; and the prayers which followed had a heartiness which, even in those heroic days of monastic devotion, they must sometimes have missed. But, just as Pambo was concluding the words of consecration, the door was suddenly burst open, and Theophilus, in his full episcopal robes and attended by soldiers, entered the church.

Several of the monks, in nervous terror, started to their feet ; but Pambo raised his hand calmly as if to demand silence, and concluded the passage with the well-known words, "Take, eat." Theophilus, beside himself with fury at the calmness of his opponent, strode up the church, and exclaimed, "Heretic ! do not desecrate these sacred words with your using, but leave this church instantly."

Pambo paused for a moment and looked the intruder steadily in the face. "Brother," he said, "if you stay and communicate with us, be it so ; but, if not, depart and trouble us no more." Then he signed to the young monk to proceed with the service, who, raising the consecrated bread, exclaimed, "Stretch forth your hands." (*Εκτεινατε.*)

Theophilus had been awed for the moment by the calmness of Pambo ; but at this act of defiance the wild beast in him seemed to rise again ; and snatching the consecrated

bread from the hand of the officiating monk threw it on the ground.

A shriek of horror rose from the brethren, who simultaneously sprang to their feet. The young monk who had been attacked instinctively rushed forward in protest; a soldier, who was standing near Theophilus, supposing that he was about to assail him, struck him to the ground; and the cries of the monks were answered by a fierce yell from the Alexandrian mob outside the church, who had accompanied Theophilus in hopes of plunder. The monks, in wild fury, pressed forward on their persecutors; and some blows had been struck when a red glare shone through the doors of the church. A cry at once arose that the building was on fire; and, in wild panic, soldiers, priests, and monks poured headlong out of the chapel. Outside they found the mob in full enjoyment of their opportunities. The bread and vegetables kept for the food of the monks, the wine stored away for the use of the sick, had all been seized, and either consumed on the spot or piled ready to take away. The cells of the monks had been ransacked; and everything that seemed worth carrying off had been appropriated by the mob, while in their fury at finding so little to carry off, the MSS., chiefly copies of the Scriptures, had been burned, and the flames were quickly spreading to the few buildings on the mountain. Wild shouts of mingled Greek and Egyptian added to the horror of this mad carnival. Some of the soldiers would have interfered to check the disturbance, but Theophilus was bent on accomplishing the work for which he came; and, as the soldiers had been directed to act under his orders, they were obliged to obey.

Pambo and most of the monks were compelled to leave the monastery and march down the hill; but Telemachus succeeded in detaching himself from the others and hastened to the well where Isidorus and the other two were con-

cealed. When he reached the spot he had much difficulty in finding the rope which had been hidden in the long grass ; and it required all his strength, by his unaided efforts, to remove the heavy stone. This done, he endeavoured to secure the rope to one of the palm-trees, and while doing so he again fancied that he heard footsteps ; but this time they were not retreating, but seemed to be coming towards him. He knew that it would be useless to leave his friends in the well as it was no longer concealed, so, with desperate efforts, he dragged them up, one after the other. Just as Ammonius, who was the last, had been raised to the top, a figure stepped out of the darkness.

Telemachus started forward and demanded what the stranger required. The man laid his finger on his lips, and, whispering low, he answered in Egyptian that he was a friend.

" But why should I trust you ? " said Telemachus.

" Because we have a common enemy," replied the other. " I am no Christian. I am one of those whom this same lordly bishop, Theophilus, drove out of Alexandria for trying to defend the temple of Serapis ; and while I lived in Alexandria I received some kindness from the old priest, who, I perceive, is hiding here. And what says the old book of Ptah-hotep ? ' Take care of those who are faithful to thee, even when thine own estate is in evil case, so shall thy merit be greater than the honours that are done thee.' Listen then ! we will go down by a winding path that I know of to the lake, while the soldiers of Theophilus are dealing with your friends yonder. On the lake I have a boat ready ; and when you are safe on the other side you may find means to reach Memphis, long before Theophilus can overtake you. And once there you will hear of hiding-places where he cannot find you."

Telemachus communicated this proposal to Isidorus and the others. Isidorus recognized the boatman, and consented

to trust to his guidance ; so they made their way down the mountain and reached the boat in safety.

Then Telemachus paused. "I must return to the Abbot and tell him what has happened. "For you," he said to the boatman, "you know that we monks are poor, and I have no hope of rewarding you in this world ; and the blessing of a Christian——"

"Is of no value to me," interrupted the Egyptian ; "for any acts of mercy, Osiris can reward me hereafter, in the day when I stand before the judges of the dead." So saying, he helped his aged charges into the boat, and pushed off without waiting for any further words. Telemachus gazed after him with bitter thoughts in his heart, and then hastened up the hill to where Pambo was still standing with his monks, some of whom had collected a little of the food which remained to give them support on their journey. The soldiers stood around them, their faces lit up by the flames which were ascending from the burning buildings, a little apart stood Theophilus, speaking in hurried and fierce tones to one of the officers.

"How ?" said he. "He cannot be found ? Where can they have concealed him ? Theodorus, perhaps, can guide us."

As he spoke Theodorus came from the back where he had been hidden by the Alexandrian priests. At the same moment Telemachus reached the brow of the hill, and found himself face to face with the man who had betrayed him and the other monks. A look of intense aversion passed over his face, and he recoiled a step or two. Theophilus noticed the motion, and he noticed too how pale the face of Theodorus had become.

"What do you know of this monk ?" he said suddenly.

"He is——" said Theodorus, but hesitated for a moment, a sense of shame apparently checking his utterance. Before he could complete his sentence the attention of his audience

was distracted by a new interest. The wild yells of the mob seemed suddenly to have sunk into silence; and from a distant part of the hill came a low sound, hardly at first distinguishable from the wind, but gradually recognized as a funeral chant. Monks, soldiers, and priests alike turned in amazement as a small body of the brethren emerged from the darkness and advanced, in the full glare of the burning church, bearing on their shoulders a hastily constructed bier, upon which lay the body of the young monk who had been struck down by the soldiers and trampled to death by the crowd. In his hand still remained, clutched in death, the plate on which the sacred bread had rested. Even Theophilus drew back as the monks marched round in solemn procession and bore their brother to a cavern on the side of the hill where they laid the body, placing a stone at the mouth of the cave.

Theophilus gazed for a moment in the direction of the mourners, then, turning to Pambo, said: "You must depart this night from the monastery, you and your monks, that your places may be supplied by those who are free from the taint of heresy. You have been condemned by a Council of Bishops in Alexandria; and you will find that all true Christians will join in that condemnation."

Pambo looked at him sternly and answered: "Theophilus! may God judge betwixt you and us, and may He give you grace to repent of the wrong which you have done! Come, my brethren, let us go!"

The little band was quickly formed into a procession, and boldly chanting, "Why do the heathen so furiously rage together," they slowly descended the hill, leaving behind them the ruins of all that they cared for on earth.

## *CHAPTER VI*

# *OLD FAITHS AND NEW HOPES*

> The East bowed low before the blast,
> In silent deep disdain ;
> She let the legions thunder past,
> Then plunged in thought again.
>
> MATTHEW ARNOLD.

ANXIOUS to avoid any possibility of discovery for Isidorus and Ammonius, Telemachus persuaded Pambo to proceed by land towards Memphis, rather than to attempt crossing the lake, so that it was many days before they came in sight of the already half-ruined towers of that ancient city. As they entered one of the gates their ear was struck with the sound of strange music, and they saw a long procession advancing. The sounds were evidently those of lamentation, though the ears of the monks were unused to the instruments, which accompanied the song ; Pambo and the older monks, long unaccustomed to any language except the Greek of their devotions and of ordinary intercourse, or the Latin that was the means of communication with visitors from a distance, did not at once recognize the native language of Egypt. As the procession came closer the monks drew back amazed at the sight of six women in yellow dresses, and bearing cones on their heads, who were clashing cymbals as they advanced and dancing to the sound. These were followed by singers whose words were unintelligible to the monks, but whose gestures showed that

their songs referred to the dead man whose figure was borne aloft in an open coffin a little way behind them. Following the coffin came priests in robes marked with strange hieroglyphics, while round them gathered a miscellaneous crowd who joined in the chorus of the song.

Confused and bewildered by the sight, Pambo and most of the elder monks drew farther back, as if to avoid contamination of the procession; but some of the younger ones were more reluctant to leave so novel a sight, and it was but slowly and hesitatingly that they obeyed the commands of their abbot. Telemachus, for his part, moved by a strange awe, lingered longer and nearer to the procession than the others; the weird and fantastic figures and the strange songs seemed, in some inexplicable way, to recall some of the fancies of his dreams; while at the same time they brought back memories, vivid though confused, of his early life in Alexandria. He was suddenly roused from this reverie by a touch on the shoulder, and, looking round, he saw that one of the priests had separated himself from the rest and had gradually drawn near him unobserved. As Telemachus turned the priest said to him in Greek, "You are seeking your friends who were brought here by Amasis the boatman some days ago. Come with me and I will show you where they are."

Then he led him back through the gate to where the pyramid stood at some little distance.

"See!" said he, pointing to the door of the pyramid. "You will find your friends within those walls, taking refuge under the building which represents the power and wisdom of so many centuries."

Telemachus had perhaps less horror than some of his fellows of contact with the heathen rites. Yet the thought of the monks, expelled from their homes by a Christian bishop, taking refuge in the very centre of the old idolatry, under the auspices of a heathen priest, gave him a shock

which he could hardly fail to express in his face. The priest, long trained in studying countenances, understood at once what was passing in his mind. "You wonder," he said, "that Christian monks should take refuge under the shadow of the faith which their great emperor, Theodosius, tried to destroy. Yet there is nothing new in such an application for our protection. Deny it if you will, all the wise men of the world have come to us from the earliest times. Moses learned from us the wisdom which he tried to use against us. Pythagoras and Plato have owned their obligations to us; and as for you Christians, what is your creed but a dim recollection of the story of the labours and death of Osiris, and of the struggle of Horus with Typhon? Even your mysterious doctrine of the Trinity was anticipated by the thrice great Hermes; and yet when Julian wished to restore the old faith he was forced to come for advice to the Egyptian Abammon, whom the Greeks call Iamblichus. And, even now, when they would fain speak of our creed as crushed out, and of our race as enslaved—see here the proofs of the power which we have over our conquerors," and he pointed to certain Greek verses on the pyramid, in which pilgrims from Rome to Memphis had recently given thanks for their restoration to health.

Telemachus, carried away by the fervour of the old man's eloquence, had had neither the power nor the opportunity of uttering a word; but he now ventured to make the comment, "These thanks are only for their bodily health."

"Aye, truly," answered the Egyptian, "for that is all that they care for; but when they need the health of the mind they will come to us again. Theodosius thought to destroy our worship by spoiling the temple of Serapis, even as Cambyses had hoped to destroy it by slaying the sacred bull. Fools! they did not know that we had

realized far better than they that these animals and temples and various figures do but embody the form of one God of the world, whom our fathers worshipped more wisely and truly than they have done."

"Yet," said Telemachus, "you scarce can hope to make converts to the creed of your ancestors."

The Egyptian smiled gravely. Then he pointed to the glow of the setting sun which was spreading over the desert and illuminating the faces of the speakers. "Does the sun," he said, "try to draw up and absorb in itself all those to whom it gives light and nourishment? No, it darts its rays into the obscure corners of the world and gives light and life without asking for recognition in return. Yet if it were to disappear should we not all cease and die? Even so our wisdom has called into life all the different forms of belief which give strength and comfort to people in various parts of the world. It does not complain that those forms do not adapt themselves to its likeness; yet it will still give forth light and health to the world when the brute force of Rome has perished before the Goths, and the idle babble of Greek philosophies has been silenced by some newer form of learning."

So saying he again waved his hand towards the pyramid as a sign that Telemachus should enter, and turned away to join the procession, whose distant chant reached the ears of the monk. Telemachus stood for a moment in astonishment, and then approached the pyramid which stood up, huge and dark, against the glowing sky. He felt awed by its wonderful size, and hesitated to enter the dark and stifling passage. Summoning up courage, however, and crossing himself, he went in, groping his way along for some distance till the sound of voices attracted his attention. He thought that he could distinguish the Greek language, and hastened forward joyfully; a little farther on the narrow passage widened out into a small room, where two figures

were standing. Telemachus could not see their faces, but he recognized the voices ; and Ammonius, whose eyes had become more accustomed to the dim light, came forward and gave him his blessing. Then they asked each other eagerly about all the events that had occurred since they parted. Isidorus and Ammonius told of the kindness of the Egyptians, who had supplied them with all that was necessary for their rest and refreshment.

After these first greetings had been exchanged, Telemachus turned to Isidorus, and asked him if he had ever seen an Egyptian funeral procession. Isidorus was somewhat surprised at the tone of mingled horror and amazement in which Telemachus spoke. Accustomed in his life in Alexandria to see all the pageants of the different religions which prevailed there, he had almost forgotten that sense of terrible novelty with which the monk of Nitria might naturally regard the forms of a strange worship that he had not seen since childhood. But when, after some questioning, he gathered from Telemachus the substance of the Egyptian priest's words, he better understood the distress of the younger monk, and at once endeavoured to encourage and console him.

"Fear not, my son," he said ; "if these men have only their own wisdom in which to trust, it will avail them nothing against the source of our strength ; yet if faith in their dead gods can rouse them to such courageous confidence, even in their time of suffering and banishment, how much more should we be confident and happy who rely, not on our own strength and wisdom, but on a living God, who speaks not in obscure signs and symbols, but reveals Himself to the hearts of all who seek Him in sincerity and faith."

"Yet," said Ammonius, "I cannot but think that, for the sake of those who are younger and less experienced than we are, it would not be well to remain long in this

city of ancient idolatry, and under the protection of heathen priests."

"I see not," answered Isidorus, "that we have in aught compromised our faith. If these heathens have done acts of mercy, which would better beseem Christians, it is not for us to hinder them in that, or to receive them ungraciously; that we should have to receive favours at heathen hands is to the shame of Theophilus rather than of ourselves."

"Perhaps," said Ammonius, "it may be a judgment upon us for the sins and shortcomings of our own lives. Yet are we bound to avoid this state of temptation so soon as we can fly from it."

As he spoke, the door of the pyramid opened, and Pambo entered, accompanied by one or two of the monks.

"My brother," he exclaimed to Isidorus, "your wisdom may best advise us in this strait. Dispatches have just arrived from Jerusalem, sent by the same woman whom Hieronymus brought to us some years ago. Her messengers went to Nitria, and, finding our monastery destroyed, followed us here. Their first purpose is now of no avail; for they came to warn us of the designs of Theophilus, and to provide us with means of escape. But since it hath been otherwise ordered, think you that it is wise to accept this woman's offer and to go to Jerusalem where, she says, the bishop will receive us gladly, and where Ruffinus, a former monk of Nitria, is also ready to protect his brethren?"

"It is an evil choice," said Ammonius, before Isidorus could answer; "an evil choice, indeed, between the protection of the heathen and the wiles of a strange woman. Moreover, was she not closely allied with that very Hieronymus who has stirred up Theophilus against us; so closely, indeed, that some men said that Hieronymus had broken his vows and yielded to the snares of the senses."

"Nay, my brother, said Pambo, gently, "I think that those who said so erred as much through lack of charity

as it may be Hieronymus erred in lack of wisdom and in self-conceit. I understand not how these men who live in the world bear themselves in their relations with women ; but I feel sure that, however Hieronymus hath erred in his judgment of Origen, and of those who follow him, and however much he may have trusted unduly to the learning of this world, he hath not failed in purity of heart and act ; and as for this woman, though she may have too much of the love of the world in her, she is surely seeking after the truth."

" And it may be," added Isidorus, " that she is raised up, as other women have been, for the protection of those who have suffered for the truth. Bethink you, brother," he said to Ammonius, " that many of those whom we reverence as blessed saints were but women on earth ; and I have heard that either this woman or one of her family gave some assistance to those who were cast out of Nitria by the heretic emperor Valens."

Ammonius looked vexed, but did not know what to reply. His strong will and clear purpose had often prevailed over the gentle and hesitating Pambo, but with Isidorus he felt it always more difficult to deal. He had known him long, and he had recognized, with much surprise, that his larger experience of the world and its ways had not destroyed in Isidorus that purity of thought and mind which Ammonius reverenced and strove after, but which he was too wise and humble to think that he had attained unto. Moreover, Isidorus had the prestige belonging to a trusted fellow-worker of the great Athanasius ; and though Ammonius had himself enjoyed some measure of Athanasius's confidence, he had felt without envy, though perhaps with some pain, that that shrewd leader of men had often turned to Isidorus in matters where his judgment came into conflict with that of Ammonius. But, though silenced for a moment by the words of his friend, Ammonius could

not overlook the fact that at least one of his difficulties had not been met, so he said, after a moment's pause :

" But have you forgotten, my brother, that this Melaneia was a friend and counsellor of Hieronymus ? How can it be then that she means to support us against him ? "

" It can scarce be," said Pambo, " that she has still much kindness for him ; for she speaks in her letters with the warmest friendliness of that Ruffinus who is now, they say, the bitter enemy of Hieronymus ; and I bethink me that there were signs, even during their visit to Nitria, that the friendship between them was one which might not last long."

" At any rate," said Isidorus, " it seems to me the safer and wiser course to go with all speed to Jerusalem. If this woman hath any design to entrap us, which is most unlikely, we shall at least be within reach of Christians, who would be willing to protect us, and not left, as here, at the mercy of heathens, or in danger of the savage attacks of Theophilus. And if, on the other hand, as I think, she means well to us, it will be easy to avoid any danger to our younger brethren from those fascinations of which Brother Ammonius speaks, by putting the young monks under the protection of the Bishop of Jerusalem ; or, if need be, by forwarding them from thence to some place of refuge."

" I am content," answered Ammonius, " provided that for greater security we divide ourselves into two parties. I counsel that while one party proceed to Pelusia and there take ship for Joppa, the other should go by the land route across Arabia to Jerusalem."

This was readily agreed to, and the preparations were soon made. And it was with a sense of relief that Telemachus left Memphis behind him and followed Ammonius to Pelusia.

## *CHAPTER VII*

# *A WISE MAN'S BLUNDERS*

"Scorn they grave and learned?

. . . .

Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,

. . . .

Such, and so finely bolted didst thou seem;
And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot,
To mark the full-fraught man and best indued
with some suspicion."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE terrors of the sea at that time were greatly increased by the difficulties of obtaining capable seamen, and by the fear felt, both by passengers and rowers, of going far from the shore. Fortunately, however, the voyage along the coast of Palestine did not involve the necessity of any attempts to go out into the deep; while the difficulties of obtaining food, which tried other passengers, were of little moment to the monks, long accustomed to severe fasts and a frugal diet.

Ammonius had chosen the sea voyage, partly because he believed it to be the more dangerous route, and partly that he could not reconcile himself to travel altogether at the expense of Melaneia; and he and the other monks offered to do some work on the voyage as payment for their passage. On the day before they landed at Joppa, Ammonius called Telemachus apart, and examined him at some length on his intercourse with Jerome on the occasion of Jerome's visit to Nitria. He listened attentively

to all that Telemachus said ; and, when he had finished, he laid his hand on the head of the young monk and said :

"Think you not, my son, that it were better for us to appeal to this learned man, who, it may be, has been misled into hasty and violent action by some minions of Theophilus, rather than to trust to the caprices of a foolish and headstrong woman ?"

Telemachus was somewhat startled at being appealed to by one whom he had always looked up to as his superior in the convent, and whom he knew to be a man of strong will and of great, if limited, experience. But the fact was that Ammonius, like so many men of his character, while willing enough to give advice to his chiefs, was extremely reluctant to go beyond the forms of monastic obedience ; and as he could scarcely be conscious of the power which his will exercised over Pambo, he naturally thought himself as obedient and deferential a subject of the abbot as any to be found in the convent. At the same time he shrank with undiminished aversion from the thought of contact with a woman, a woman, too, of whose saintliness he was far from being convinced. He was therefore eager to justify himself for what, in the ordinary course of monastic life, he might have judged disobedience to the authority of the abbot ; and, knowing that Telemachus had had private interviews with Jerome during his stay at Nitria, Ammonius tried to persuade himself that Telemachus might have special information as to Pambo's wishes on this subject.

Telemachus felt the bracing effect which a thoughtful man, conscious of growing powers within him, naturally feels at being seriously consulted by an elder person ; so, when he had recovered his first surprise, he answered boldly :

"Truly, my Father, I saw nothing, save for one moment, of the woman of whom you speak ; and I cannot therefore

judge of the grounds which have led our abbot to put himself and us under her care; but that our holy father thought highly in former times of the learned Hieronymus, and that he has grieved much at hearing that he was opposed to us, of that I am sure; and since Bethlehem, where Hieronymus is, is not far from Jerusalem, it may be that we shall best carry out the purpose of our journey by first turning aside to Bethlehem and attempting to clear the mind of this learned and holy man from the effects of false stories by which it has been abused; and assuredly our abbot would wish us to follow your guidance in these matters."

"You say well, my son," answered Ammonius, much pleased at the confirmation of his wishes; "and believe me a monk is as much bound to give advice when it is asked for by his superiors, as he is to obey silently when such obedience is demanded. We will, therefore, first proceed to Bethlehem, and ask an audience of the learned Hieronymus; thus we may have better news to carry to our abbot and Isidorus at Jerusalem."

The landing at Joppa was a matter of some trouble and anxiety, owing to the narrowness and inconvenience of the port and the number of boats that desired to enter it; but at last it was effected, and the monks set out on their long journey from Joppa to Bethlehem. As they walked along, Ammonius, whose spirits had been raised by being relieved from dependence on Melaneia's patronage, set himself to comfort and encourage those monks who had been disheartened by the trials and inconveniences of the voyage. Telemachus, on the other hand, was troubled with many perplexing thoughts. After the first audacity of his advice, he began to doubt whether good would come of this interview. He did not, indeed, fear that Pambo would rebuke him for assisting in carrying out what were evidently the real wishes of Ammonius; but he greatly feared the

reception which their party might meet with from Jerome. He remembered, with something like shrinking, the effect which the shrewd and almost worldly tone of some of Jerome's utterances had produced upon him ; and, though he was thankful for the kindly and tolerant attitude of the great teacher towards himself, he could not but doubt whether there was sufficient mutual understanding between Jerome and the monks of Nitria to give an opening for the explanation of any differences that might have arisen between them. He recalled, indeed, with sympathy those fiery denunciations by Jerome of the corruptions of Rome, which had so quickened his interest in the fate of that great city ; and he half hoped that, in the feeling which had expressed itself in those words, there might be some point of contact with the desire for a purer and more spiritual life which Telemachus had derived from the teaching of Origen. At any rate, whatever points of antagonism there might be between Jerome and the Origenists, Telemachus could not persuade himself that a man, whose reputation for wisdom and saintliness was so widely noised abroad, could commit himself to approval of the savage and unchristian conduct of Theophilus.

While he had been thus meditating, Ammonius had entered into conversation with several of their fellow-travellers, and one of these had pointed out to him a resting-place on the road which would offer better accommodation than they could find in the ordinary inn.

" I thank you, my son," said Ammonius ; " for though we monks care not for soft lying, or dainty food, yet we would willingly avoid the noisy revelry and loose talk which, they say, prevails too much in these public inns."

" Even so, Father," answered the other ; " and it is chiefly for that reason that the holy Paula has devoted much of her substance to providing these places of rest for those pious travellers who come to visit Bethlehem, especially

for those who wish to ask advice and help from the learned Hieronymus."

"It was a good and Christian act," answered Ammonius; "yet I trust," he added, after a moment's pause, "that this devout lady doth not intrude herself as much as formerly on the company of this learned father or the monks that follow him. I do not mean," he added hastily, remembering the rebukes of Isidorus and Pambo, "that there was aught of ill intention on her part; but seeing that the learned Hieronymus is still bound by monastic vows, and hath about him many monks doubtless less wise and discreet than himself, it is not well that men of the world, or enemies of our faith, should have occasion to blaspheme against us."

"The holy Paula," replied the other, with a scarcely suppressed tone of anger, "passes most of her life in fasting and prayer with women like-minded with herself; and though she may occasionally consult her spiritual Father on urgent matters of conscience, yet seeing that the greater part of his time is given up to his learned writings in defence of our faith, those must be false or foul-minded indeed who can find aught to blame or suspect in his intercourse with the holy Paula."

Ammonius was silent, consoled to some extent by the hope of seeing Jerome alone and separated from the influence of women; and he was not unwilling to be convinced that the woman whose hospitality he was, in a sense, about to accept, was as near sainthood as he could suppose a woman capable of arriving. He knew, by the constant report of travellers, that the inns of that day were often used as a cover for debauchery and licence of all kinds; and he felt it better to incur the responsibility of contracting an obligation to a woman, highly reverenced by many honourable men, than to expose himself, and still more the young monks in his charge, to contact with women about whose character no one had any doubt. He further

used all the opportunity which the journey of the next two days offered to glean from his fellow-travellers anything that they could tell him of the habits of Jerome and his followers. From these accounts he derived much satisfaction. Occasionally, indeed, references would be made to Jerome's fierceness against heresy, and particularly against the followers of Origen ; but Ammonius thought it not well to enter into discussion on these matters with laymen, who were probably ignorant of the real points at issue, and resolved instead to defer all argument until he was face to face with Jerome himself.

At last, on the fourth day of their journey, the travellers came in sight of a great wood clothing the upper part of a hill. The lower part was covered with vineyards, and the fields at the foot were rich with corn, while, beyond the trees, the travellers could dimly discern the grey walls of the monastery and church of Bethlehem.

"See there!" said one of the party in an awestruck tone. "There is the church which we come to see ; sacred, indeed, from the devotion of those who live under its shadow ; but more sacred in that it covers the cave whence came the redemption of mankind."

A solemn silence fell upon the monks ; and, as they moved slowly forward, the thought of the special object of their visit was, for the time, completely lost in the memory of the sacred event which made the spot dear to all Christians.

In Telemachus, particularly, there arose a strange joy and hope, a hope of he could scarcely tell what, but which might best be described as a sense that one, who had been privileged to come near to so sacred a place, could not be intended wholly to live in vain. Yet scarcely had this hope arisen when he felt a pang of repentance ; so unsuitable did it seem that, in such a place and time, he should be thinking at all of his own separate work ; and he struggled to free himself

altogether from mere thought, and to rise into the state described by Origen when he said, "Our mind cannot pray unless the spirit prays first, as though in the presence of one who is listening to it for guidance." [1]

He was suddenly startled from these thoughts by the sound of voices coming from the farther side of the grove into which they had now entered.

"Nay, my daughter," said the voice of a man, somewhat shaken by age or weakness, "think not that I desire you to conform to any rules of the world; but it is almost necessary in these days, when such strange heresies are afloat about the extinction of the body, that we, who hold the true teaching of the apostles, should not destroy or weaken its usefulness; and you, my daughter, who may still have many years of life before you, and who have been entrusted by God with so much wealth, should not idly throw away any opportunity without considering whether you have made the best use of it for the glory of God and the service of the poor."

"I would gladly obey you," answered the woman, "in all things lawful; but is it well that you should impose upon me a conformity to the world from which you shrink yourself?"

"We have not all the same duties, my daughter," answered the old man, "nor are our bodies all made to bear the same burdens; but I have no time to discuss this matter further, rather I would entreat you to consider it yourself in prayer and humility lest you should be puffed up with pride of a sacrifice which God has not required of you."

By the rustle of the dress they could hear that the woman was retiring. Then Ammonius, who had signed to the monks to hold back while the conversation continued, stepped forward from among the trees which concealed

[1] *Οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται ἡμῶν ὁ νοῦς προσεύξασθαι ἐαὐ μὴ πρὸ αὐτοῦ τὸ πνεῦμα προσεύζηται διονὲι ἐν ὑπηκόῳ ἀυτοῦ.*—(*Περὶ τῆς Εὐχῆς.*)

them, followed by Telemachus and a few of the monks who were nearest to him.

Telemachus had recognized some of the tones of the voice of Jerome, but he felt almost doubtful of his recognition when he stood face to face with a white-haired man, apparently bent with age, whom it was difficult to identify at first with the vigorous visitor to Nitria whom he had seen seven years before. Then, no doubt, Jerome's face had been marked with the pale, worn look caused by an ascetic life ; but now there was an appearance of increased age and feebleness, for which the mere length of years could not account, and there was a strange look about the eyes, as he raised them to the strangers, which seemed to show some loss of that keen insight and power of humorous criticism which had in former days distinguished his face from that of the conventional ascetic. An expression of pleasure, however, once more lit up his features as he observed the monastic dress of his visitors, and to Ammonius's question, "Do I speak with the holy and learned Hieronymus?" he answered, "I am Hieronymus, my brother, but for holiness and learning, let God judge us and not man!" Then he added immediately, "You seem to have come from a distance, my brother ; and though you and these brethren, like myself, recognize other rules of life than those of the world, yet you will not forbid me to perform that duty of hospitality to strangers which our holy faith imposes on us."

So saying he led the way to the guest-chamber near the convent. When they had refreshed themselves, he said, addressing Ammonius, "As you, like myself, my brother, are bound by monastic vows, and as you seem to know something of the special duties that are laid upon me, I need not say that I am sure this visit was not paid without some important purpose."

"Most true, my Father," answered Ammonius ; "we

come from the distant monastery of Nitria which you honoured with a visit some years ago."

A strange, eager look passed into Jerome's eyes. "I know well," he said, "the great devotion and piety of the monks of Nitria, and I rejoiced to hear, by a message received to-day from Alexandria, that they have been purged from the evil taint which threatened to destroy their excellence, and that the snakes, who were hidden in their monastery, have been cast out."

"The Bishop of Alexandria," answered Ammonius, "has indeed dealt most heavily with us; and whether he has been moved to this task by zeal against heresy or no, let him answer to God and his conscience; but that he has laid hands cruelly on many innocent persons, and injured many who are known for their services to God and the Catholic faith, that I can testify from my own knowledge."

"It may be," said Jerome, darting a look of suspicion at his visitor, "it may be that it has been somewhat difficult, after so long a delay, to separate the innocent from the guilty; yet I can scarce think that men of your age and experience can be held wholly innocent in this matter, since you have so long suffered this poison to infect those under your charge."

"But if I have heard aright," answered Ammonius, "you yourself have translated into Latin, and made known to the world, many of the writings of Origen."

Jerome's lip quivered as he leant his head for a moment on his hand before he could answer.

"If I have sinned, my brother," he said at last with an effort at self-control, "I have been severely punished for it; for men have attributed to me sympathy with Origen in heresies which I have ever denounced. Surely you must know, if your devotions in the monastery have left you time for these studies, that this man, with all his learning, hath fallen into deadly and soul-destroying heresies. I

speak not of such follies as his fancies about pre-existence, or the nature of angels; but know you not that he has tried to explain away the meaning of the sacred Scriptures, especially the story of the creation of man; that he has denied, or tried to reduce to some mere phantastic sophism, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; that he has held out hopes of salvation for the Enemy of mankind, and for those who follow him; and that he has even degraded our blessed Saviour, who was born in this sacred place, to the level of the Seraphim?"

Ammonius was startled at the sudden and increasing vehemence of one who, but a few minutes before, had seemed the very type of a friendly and courteous host; but, as a fellow-worker with Athanasius, he was too well trained in traditions of theological controversy to shrink from such an attack as this, however unexpected. He girded himself, therefore, for the contest, and was soon in the thick of the argument; denying some charges, showing that others were exaggerated, and defending some of the doctrines that were attacked.

Telemachus, for his part, listened to Ammonius's defence with almost more pain than to the attack of Jerome. He had drawn from the words of Origen that inspiring force and sustenance of his daily life and thought which can never be translated into more definite language. The wonderful flashes of spiritual imagination, which are scattered like jewels over the writings of Origen, had helped to draw Telemachus into that communion with the unseen world which was gradually nerving him for the work of his life; and to hear these living words reduced into cut-and-dried doctrines, and used to prove the agreement of the author with the propositions laid down by the Nicene Council, or with some narrow and restricted interpretation of Scripture, this was a desecration under which Telemachus writhed. If he had had to defend his master from the

attacks of Jerome, he could only have fallen back on the old answer, so illogical yet so morally convincing, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; but this I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Jerome, on his part, though his eyes flashed and his teeth clenched, had yet restrained himself, at first, within the bounds of partially rational argument, until, in one of the pauses of the discussion, he happened to ask whether Pambo was still in Nitria, and if it was by his advice that Ammonius had come to Bethlehem.

"Our abbot," replied Ammonius, "has been cast out like ourselves; and he has now gone to Jerusalem with several of our brethren, by the advice of a woman, who was at one time, I think, a follower of yours."

"What!" exclaimed Jerome, springing to his feet in a fury. "Do you speak of Melaneia, that traitress whose heart is as black as her name; who stirred up the Emperor Arcadius and his favourites against my life; who lives but to scatter poison wherever she goes? Nay, if you are spies of hers, it is no wonder that you go about scattering heresies. Go forth at once from this sacred place, and dare not to venture here again! I will write to Theophilus that, though he has done well to drive you forth from your sacred monastery, he has done ill to let you escape so easily out of his hands!"

So saying he rose and left the room in a great fury. Even Ammonius was half-terrified at this outburst; and he resolved, at once, that they must leave Bethlehem immediately and hasten to Jerusalem.

They accomplished the journey to Jerusalem without further adventure, and, entering the gates of the town, eagerly inquired for the house where the monks had been lodged by Melaneia. On arriving there they found Pambo and Isidorus in a state of great anxiety.

"Where have you tarried, my brothers?" said the

Abbot eagerly, coming towards them. "We had hoped for your advice and help long since. The gracious and noble lady, to whose care we owe our presence here, has been suddenly summoned to the Governor of the province, I know not on what charge ; but I fear that it is somehow connected with her protection of us ; and we have now, for some hours, waited in vain for news of her."

"Fear not, my Father," said a voice, as the door opened, and Melaneia herself entered the room. She had still much of her former beauty remaining, and her bearing was even more stately and imposing ; but there was an expression on her face, as she entered, which had more of worldly pride and scorn in it than was quite pleasing to most of her guests.

"Fear not, my Father," she repeated, addressing Pambo ; "there are those both in Rome and Jerusalem who can protect both me and my friends from tyranny and insult."

"I am glad to see that you have escaped, my daughter," said Pambo heartily, "and that the power of law and justice is still strong enough to show kindness to the oppressed. But may we know by what means you are delivered ?"

"Truly, Father," answered Melaneia, "with an unjust judge other methods are necessary than an appeal to justice. I told the Governor of my uncle who had been Prefect of Rome, of my father who had been a Governor in Spain, and of others who had wealth and rank enough to protect me, if need be. He was startled at my defiance, and finally let me go with humble apologies." She looked round, as if for applause, and felt a moment's consternation at seeing a somewhat shocked expression on Pambo's face, and an air of confusion and astonishment on those of the other monks.

"I see, my Father," she said, with a slight blush, "that you do not approve of my worldly methods ; but you will grant me that it is not well to cast pearls before swine ;

and it is useless to talk of justice and mercy to those who know not the meaning of the words. And now hear my counsel! Ruffinus and I are determined to proceed forthwith to Rome. The late Bishop of Rome decided in our favour in this controversy. But Hieronymus and his friends are stirring up the new bishop against us; and we must needs hasten to Rome in person, if justice is to be done. For you, my Father, I counsel you not to remain here too long." As she spoke, she advanced farther into the room and lowered her voice. "The Bishop of Jerusalem is half weary of this controversy, and he inclines to reconciliation with Hieronymus. I doubt, therefore, if it will fare altogether well with you when Ruffinus and I have left this city. I advise that you hasten with all speed to Constantinople. The noble and eloquent bishop there is ever the friend of justice and mercy; and, though Theophilus hates him most deadly, I think also that he fears him. There you can find shelter and justice, if anywhere, and I meanwhile will let you know how things fare with me at Rome. So, my Father, I ask for your parting blessing; and remember your loving daughter, if you should have need of her help."

## CHAPTER VIII

# A RIGHTEOUS MAN'S DIFFICULTIES

Justice is like the Kingdom of God—it is not without us as a fact, it is within us as a great yearning.

GEORGE ELIOT.

IN a room of the episcopal palace at Constantinople stood two men. The elder was somewhat over forty years of age. A broad forehead and kindly look of the eyes attracted the sympathy and confidence of those who came near him, while a twitch of pain about the lips, and a stoop in a figure naturally made for stateliness, gave indications at once of the asceticism of his early life and of the still more wearing troubles which accompanied his later dignities. He was still dressed in his episcopal robes, having just returned from the neighbouring church, and he had been arrested, on entering the room, by the words of the other person present. This was a man somewhat taller than the bishop, but of a dark and repellent appearance; although his attitude was deferential, and his look appeared to be generally fixed with reverent attention on the bishop, yet his eye would occasionally wander into various parts of the room as if either fearing interruption or seeking some unknown enemy.

"Believe me," he was saying, "I would not distress Your Holiness with unfounded rumours; but the fact of this conspiracy is beyond all doubt. Indeed, I myself met the messengers, who were bearing letters from Acacius and Severianus to the Bishop of Alexandria."

"Beware, my son," said Chrysostom, "how you take too much heed to rumours. What know we of the subject on which Acacius and Severianus may have to write to Alexandria? Remember that you were somewhat too hasty with your charges against Severianus on a former occasion. And as for Acacius, what cause of offence has he against me? And what reason have I to suspect a man who is much honoured in the Church?"

"Alas!" said Serapion, "Your Holiness makes enemies by means that you little think of. Acacius complains that other bishops, coming to Constantinople, were welcomed in former times with splendid hospitality by Your Holiness's predecessors; but that you, either from pride or for some other reason, will not even eat or drink with those who come to see you, but retire to your own rooms to eat in private."

"And, doubtless, to indulge in some secret debauch," answered Chrysostom scornfully. "Why do you trouble me with these things, Serapion? Is there not enough in this wicked city to occupy the mind and thoughts of its bishop without your treasuring up and repeating to me every hasty and ill-judged speech, which the infirmities of human nature or the temptations of the Devil may provoke, even from the best of us? And now I bethink me that, if I have failed in the duties of hospitality to wealthy bishops, as Acacius asserts, there are at least others to whom I can make good my failures. Did I not hear, just before I went to the church, of some strangers who had arrived in Constantinople in sorry plight this morning, and who desired to see me?"

"Your Holiness doubtless refers to the monks from Nitria," answered Serapion.

"From Nitria!" exclaimed Chrysostom joyfully. "I should fail not only in hospitality but in gratitude were I to hesitate to welcome them. Admit them instantly."

Serapion bowed, somewhat abashed, and withdrew into an inner room, whence he shortly returned, ushering in Pambo and his monks. Chrysostom hastened to meet them and cordially embraced them.

"Welcome, my brothers," he said; "it is doubtless some most holy errand that has brought you from the sacred mount of Nitria into the troubles of this worldly city." Then suddenly perceiving Ammonius, he added, "Ah! my reverend brother, I remember well how you and your valiant brethren came down to our deliverance at Antioch, when the rich and powerful men of the city were fleeing away or hiding themselves from the wrath of the minions of Theodosius; and how for long days you resisted their unjust decree, and convinced them, at last, that the destruction of a stone statue was not worth the death of one being made in the image of God. But what errand can bring you now to Constantinople? For though, God knows, there is sin and cruelty enough here to need the help of all the saintliest men in the Empire, yet I know of no special outburst of wickedness of which the rumour is likely to have spread so far as to have disturbed you in your holy retreat."

"Alas! Reverend Father," answered Ammonius, "we come no longer as champions of the oppressed, but as ourselves suppliants for protection against the persecution of the wicked."

"Indeed!" said Chrysostom in astonishment. "But what wild marauders or cruel and tyrannical Prefects have dared to molest you? If the latter, I am sure it is contrary to the wish of our gracious Emperor and Empress, who, if sometimes misled by unwise advisers, are yet true lovers of our holy Church, and therefore must needs reverence the monks of Nitria."

"No wandering heathen marauder has attacked us," answered Ammonius. "And if a Prefect of the Empire

has lent a hand to the work, he has acted neither on his own impulse nor at the bidding of Emperor or Governor, but at the instigation of one who ought to be a protector of the flock, but who has become a wolf to rend it—even at the instigation of a bishop of the Church."

"Whom mean you?" said Chrysostom, turning a look of alarm and astonishment on the monk.

"I speak of Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria," replied Ammonius.

Chrysostom started with a look of pain, anxiety, and surprise; and, as he did so, he caught the eye of Serapion fixed on him with a glance of something like triumph. The bishop hastily turned away and paced the room in anxious thought. Ammonius, meanwhile, poured out, in vigorous and graphic language, a full account of the persecutions of Theophilus, from the time of his first unjust charges against Isidorus down to that terrible night when Pambo and his monks had been expelled from Nitria. Suddenly, in the middle of one of his most vivid descriptions, he stopped short abruptly; for Chrysostom had paused in his walk, and, standing directly opposite to the speaker, had raised his hand in a stern manner, evidently intended to command silence.

"It is not good, my brother," he said, "that you should rail thus against a ruler of the Church. Still less would it be just in me to condemn, on charges which I have had no opportunity of examining, the action of such a ruler. Withdraw awhile into the adjoining room, where all shall be prepared for your comfort, and I will let you know what I have decided."

The monks obeyed. Serapion seemed as if he would have wished to linger, but Chrysostom sternly motioned with his hand, and the deacon retired. Long and thoughtfully did he pace up and down the room considering the weighty problems before him. Stern and harsh, as he was

reputed by many, Chrysostom probably desired and loved justice more heartily than any man of his time. He always preferred to inquire on the spot in case of accusations against those over whom he exercised authority; and above all he seems to have been ever on the watch against allowing personal liking or hostility to influence his decisions. He had opposed his patron, Eutropius, when he seemed to him tyrannical and unjust; but after Eutropius had become his enemy he protected him, in his fall, from the vengeance of Eudoxia and Gainas. He had bearded Gainas in the height of his power, but had been ready to trust to his promises of more moderate action. At a later time he carried beyond the verge of wisdom his determination to believe in the repentance of his enemies, when he listened to the assurances of friendship which Eudoxia made to him, when she had discovered the full strength of his influence. But never was his desire to do equal justice so severely tested as in the case which now presented itself for his decision. He knew that Theophilus had not only opposed, but intrigued against him, at the time of his election to the bishopric of Constantinople; and he had heard accounts from more than one source of the violent and unjust action of the Bishop of Alexandria. But the sense of Theophilus's personal rivalry made Chrysostom all the more eager to avoid a hasty condemnation of him; and he was resolved to use every effort to avert collisions between Constantinople and Alexandria, which would promote disorders in the Church. On the other hand, he shrank, with even greater horror, from the thought of leaving these men, three of them at least old and feeble, to the chances of long wanderings in unknown and dangerous places; and no desire to free himself from personal prejudice could remove from his mind the belief that, in a quarrel between the monks of Nitria and Theophilus, the probabilities of justice were strongly against the latter. After weighing, for a long

time, these various considerations, he decided once more to summon the monks before him.

"Brother," he said to Ammonius as they entered, "is it impossible for you to find refuge in another place, which would less excite the jealousy of Theophilus, than a residence in Constantinople might do?"

"We know of no such place," said Ammonius, after a few minutes' consultation with Pambo. "We have already been forced to leave Jerusalem, where we took refuge at first. We hear daily of new enemies who are stirred up against us; and we hold that the Emperor, as the chief protector of the laws, and Your Holiness, as the chief bishop of the Eastern Church, are bound to do us justice."

Chrysostom paused in much agitation. "Are you sure, my brother," he repeated earnestly, "that there are none of your monks who have offended against the laws of the Church in a manner that might justly cause the anger of Theophilus? Have you, for instance, among you no supporter of the Arians, or of other known enemies of the faith?"

"There was but one," answered Pambo, after a moment's thought, "that could ever have been justly suspected of Arianism, and he was a Goth who left our monastery because he could not bear my reproofs. I think he afterwards came to this city."

"A Goth!" said Chrysostom, with much interest. "What was his name?"

Pambo paused for a moment, and turned to Telemachus, who stood behind. Chrysostom's quick eye noticed the expression of the younger monk during the brief asides which followed; and when Pambo at last mentioned Eric's name, and other particulars about him, Chrysostom inquired, pointing to Telemachus, "And did this brother live with him while he was at Nitria?"

"He did," answered Pambo; "but," he added eagerly,

"I know that Telemachus was himself entirely free from the heresy; and I believe that he even tried to turn his friend from his disorderly ways, as well as from the errors that had infected him."

"I did not ask," said Chrysostom with a smile, "from any suspicion of this young man, but rather from a hope——" then, abruptly breaking off, he said, "But we must first decide the matter that is before us. In the church of St. Anastasia there is a room where all due provision can be made for you during your stay in Constantinople; and I will write fully to the Bishop of Alexandria about these matters. But——" He paused, as if about to say something which he knew to be painful, then proceeded hurriedly, "But it will be my duty, in order to avoid scandal in the Church and undue offence to Theophilus, to prohibit you from receiving holy Eucharist, until I have had time to inquire further into the charges of Theophilus against you."

Ammonius and Pambo looked at each other for a moment in amazement; and the latter seemed inclined to remonstrate. But Chrysostom waved his hand and the monks withdrew. As Telemachus was following the others from the room, Chrysostom beckoned to him to remain. "I have heard," he said, "of this young Goth, your friend. A fiery spirit, as I understand, and one likely to be forward in the designs of Alaric. Yet I know well that these Goths may be reached by friendliness, if only one bears oneself bravely towards them. For how long did you know this man?"

"We were for about four years together in the monastery," replied Telemachus, "and I saw more of him than of almost any other monk."

"And whence came you?" asked Chrysostom.

"I was sent to Nitria," answered Telemachus, "from Pachomius' monastery in Syria; but I was born in Alexan-

dria, and was first persuaded to the monastic life by the holy Athanasius."

"And did your Gothic friend know this?" asked Chrysostom eagerly.

"Surely," said Telemachus; "there were few secrets between us."

"Nay then," said Chrysostom, "if he knew you were a friend of Athanasius, and yet admitted you to so much friendliness, he can scarce be so bitter a heretic but that we could have some hopes of him. However, I cannot employ you in this business until you and your fellow-monks are purged of any charges that Theophilus may make against you. Retire, therefore, for a while, and I will send for you on another occasion. How now, Serapion?" as the deacon entered.

"Two priests and a monk desire to see Your Holiness," said Serapion.

"Admit them," said Chrysostom, and advanced to meet his visitors. The new-comers were the two priests who had been formerly sent by Theophilus to Nitria, accompanied by the monk Theodorus. "What news bring you from Alexandria?" said Chrysostom.

"We came hither," answered one of the priests, "on business from the Bishop to the Emperor. But since we have been here, we have heard that certain turbulent monks, followers of the heretic Origen, have taken refuge in Constantinople, and have even ventured to implore the protection of Your Holiness; and we warn you, in the name of the Bishop, to have no intercourse with, and show no favour to, these monks, but to expel them forthwith from your diocese, after due reproof and condemnation of their heresies."

The arrogant tone of this demand roused, for a moment, the temper of Chrysostom; but he restrained himself by a powerful effort and answered:

"I desire to be on good terms with my brother of Alexandria, but I can condemn no man unheard. As for these monks, I would fain they had not come hither; but since they are here, I cannot do injustice by expelling them without a hearing, though I intend not to hold spiritual communion with them until, by due hearing of both sides, I am satisfied of their innocence."

"But do they deny," exclaimed Theodorus, "that they are followers of Origen?"

"Truly, I have not questioned them on that point," said Chrysostom.

"Then will Your Holiness summon them," said the monk, "and call on them to condemn Origen, even as Theophilus did?"

"Assuredly not," answered Chrysostom. "Origen was a learned and pious man, who suffered for the cause of Christ; nor have his doctrines ever been condemned by a General Council of the Church. As for me, therefore, I have no call to approve or to condemn him. Nor will I ask others to pronounce judgment where I suspend my own."

The priests looked somewhat aghast at this declaration; but over the face of Theodorus there passed a sudden expression of exultation. Chrysostom noted it, and half guessed the sinister meaning which it implied. He fixed his eyes sternly on the monk and repeated, "I say again that Origen has not been condemned by any lawful authority, nor has Theophilus the right to brand any man as a heretic on the ground of his private opinion."

"Your Holiness is mistaken," said one of the priests, "in thinking that Theophilus is acting only on his own authority in this matter. He has deliberated about it with other bishops of Egypt, and they have come to a formal decision by which they have condemned both Origen and his followers in Nitria."

"Nay, my son," answered Chrysostom, "if we are to accept the decision of such hastily convoked synods as this that you describe, even the Arians may have occasion against us. Doubtless as many bishops have signed the creed which they put forth as Theophilus can have convoked to this synod in Alexandria."

"How?" said Theodorus in a blustering tone. "Would Your Holiness identify the holy Patriarch of Alexandria with the heretic Arius?"

"My son," said Chrysostom, "if you come hither to catch up and pervert my words it were better that this conference should end."

Theodorus bowed and was about to withdraw, but one of the priests detained him.

"Nay, Holy Father," said the priest, "Theodorus has been too hasty in misinterpreting your words. We doubt not that you mean well towards the Bishop and Church of Alexandria; but we would earnestly entreat you to consider whether, in protecting these monks, you do not run the risk of a schism in the Church, which may bring discredit on us in the eyes of heathens and heretics."

"And may it not be said," added the other priest, "I mean by those in this city who love not Your Holiness, that you have decided this matter on grounds of personal feeling against one whom some count your rival?"

"I tell you," said Chrysostom, his colour rising with the sense of the injustice of the charge, "I tell you I have not decided this matter at all. I have refused to communicate with these monks until I have heard and weighed the answer of Theophilus. But to thrust them forth inhospitably from the city, or to condemn as heresy that which the Church has not condemned, such acts were not worthy of a Christian man, far less of a bishop."

"Then," said Theodorus, "you will make yourself the

judge of the acts of another bishop, who is as independent of Constantinople as of Antioch!"

Chrysostom once more fixed a piercing look on the monk, and then, turning from him to the priests said, "I will write to Theophilus in full on these matters; and I trust you will be the bearers of my letters to him. I will see you again when these letters are ready. I must now take my leave of you, but I ask that you will consider yourselves my guests while you remain in Constantinople."

The Alexandrians bowed and withdrew, and Chrysostom turned his attention to some of the many other matters which occupied the time and thoughts of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

## *CHAPTER IX*

# *THE TRIUMPH OF PURITY*

> Love Virtue ; she alone is free ;
> She can teach ye how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime :
> Or, if Virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her.
>
> MILTON.

CHRYSOSTOM'S efforts to do justice between the monks of Nitria and the Bishop of Alexandria had resulted in offending both parties. Theophilus heard with high indignation of the attempt of the bishop, whom he considered as his rival, to decide between him and those whom he looked upon as the subjects of his diocesan authority ; while Ammonius, on the other hand, resented the reproach cast upon him and his colleagues by the refusal to communicate with them. The gentler Pambo, indeed, laboured hard to repress his fierceness, and the wise and experienced Isidorus attempted to explain to him the difficulties in which Chrysostom was placed ; but Ammonius found a ready hearing among several of the other monks who, not unnaturally, looked upon Theophilus as practically self-condemned by his own violence, and who considered that when anyone in Chrysostom's position hesitated to denounce the tyrant, he became to some extent a partaker of his evil deeds.

Telemachus alone, among the younger monks, inclined to the more lenient judgment of Chrysostom's conduct. He had been impressed by the bearing, at once stately and

gentle, of the Patriarch ; and he yielded ready allegiance to that peculiar genius for leadership which was so fascinating to a mind like his. The hopes, moreover, which he had cherished, in a greater or lesser degree, ever since the visit of Jerome to Nitria, had been quickened into far intenser life by the interest which Chrysostom had shown in the future of the Goth ; and he waited, with an ever-growing impatience, for the time when the great Patriarch should send him forth on the mission at which he had hinted. This impatience was much increased by all his experiences of the life of Constantinople. The continuous bustle of the over-crowded and disorderly streets was naturally disquieting to one who was used to the open air and the peaceful life which he had enjoyed on Mount Nitria ; while the almost grotesque splendour of the dresses and equipages of the Byzantine grandees, the open wickedness that flaunted in many parts of the city, and, above all, the strange medley of heathenism and Christianity, produced in Telemachus both pain of heart and perplexity of mind. It was strange enough to see statues of heathen gods mingling with the images of Christian saints ; stranger still to find professing Christians seeking protection from "the evil eye" in amulets composed of coins marked with the likeness of heathen kings ; strangest of all to see the charioteers, of whose lawless lives and riotous demeanour he had continual proofs, invoking the Cross for success in those races which were the great sources of disorder and evil in Constantinople.

But what most of all troubled Telemachus, and made him especially eager to escape from the life of the city, was the attention which some of the idle and luxurious ladies of the court were eager to pay to the strange monks. Once, in the early days of his stay, when he was walking with one of his companions in the fashionable part of the city, a rich lady suddenly stopped her chair, as she was being carried past, and persuaded the monks to enter her

house. But the sight of the stately statues, the rich hangings, and the luxurious seats and the sound of the soft music had so startled the ascetics that they fled from the house, and never stopped till they had reached the church where they were lodged. The want of his regular work, and the close atmosphere, combined with all the above-mentioned causes to weaken the health of Telemachus. He struggled to counteract the effect of this weakness by morning strolls along the hills that looked down upon the Bosphorus.

On one of these occasions he was overtaken by a man whom he recognized as the baker who had supplied bread to the monks during their stay in the city. The man greeted him in a friendly manner, and asked for his blessing. Then he said, "I rejoice to hear that the Bishop of Cyprus, who has given our Patriarch so much trouble, has left the city. It is well that he did not venture into the Church of the Apostles, or we should have given him such a welcome as he would have remembered to his dying day."

"Ah!" said Telemachus, "I hear that the Patriarch warned him of his danger. He would take it ill that his followers should make a riot in the church."

"Aye," said the man, "we know what the Patriarch wishes, and the saints forbid that we should bring discredit on him and his teaching. But we Greeks are a fiery race; and if strangers come in to undermine our Patriarch's authority we shall let them know what we think of them. But whom have we here? A woman! and as I think in a nun's dress! Then my work for the day is useless, I may as well go home again." [1] And he set off homewards at a rapid pace.

Before the monk had recovered from his surprise, he

[1] If a man met a respectable woman on his way to work it was an omen which showed he would accomplish nothing that day: If he met a woman of ill-fame it was considered lucky: This superstition is denounced by Chrysostom in his sermons:

heard his name pronounced in a well-known voice, and, looking up, he saw Melaneia before him. She glanced for a moment with an amused surprise in the direction of the hastily retreating figure, then she turned with eagerness to Telemachus and asked, "And how have the holy brethren of Nitria fared since they came to Constantinople?"

"We have fared well in temporal matters," answered Telemachus gravely, "but I could well wish that we should not have long to remain in this evil city. What tidings do you bring us, lady, from Rome?"

"Ah! Holy Father," cried Melaneia, "if you find the new Rome, the city of Constantine, so evil, what will you think of the old Rome, which has ever been the scene of all vileness, and which is now the seat of injustice?"

"Then you think," said Telemachus, "that the Bishop of Rome will not protect our cause?"

"Protect it!" exclaimed Melaneia scornfully. "He has condemned us all!—Ruffinus, and you, and me, and all who do not bow the knee before the tyrannical rule of Hieronymus. But, I thank God, there will soon come an end to that accursed city. The Goths, whom they had hoped to bribe off with fair words and cowardly concessions, well understand their weakness. The fate of Babylon and Nineveh will soon fall on that evil place; nor can the punishment be long delayed. But tell me, how fares the holy Patriarch John? Men say he is more to be trusted than those degenerate Romans."

Before Telemachus could answer, their conversation was interrupted by a loud shout from below. They stood on the third of the seven hills of Constantinople, which stretches down gradually to the mouth of the Golden Horn. This plain was now crowded with figures, chiefly dressed in sailors' costumes, and their shouts, as they became more distinguishable, recalled to Telemachus his early memories of Alexandria. Their eager gesticulations showed that they were

welcoming some new arrival ; and, as Telemachus looked out to sea, he saw two long and gaily decorated boats, such as he had been accustomed to see crowding the port of Alexandria. The faces and figures of the passengers, and the songs of the boatmen, all recalled his memories of Egypt ; and, from the dresses of the rowers, and the general appearance of the boats, it was evident that some person of importance was arriving.

A strange mixture of terror, anxiety, and curiosity seized upon Telemachus ; and while he instinctively drew nearer to the edge of the promontory to watch the new arrivals, he yet hesitated to descend, and seemed rather to wish to hide himself behind the protection of a rock that he might not be perceived from the shore. Melaneia observed him with some interest ; and after a few minutes' pause said, "Who are these new-comers ? And why are they receiving so warm a welcome ?"

"They come from Egypt," answered Telemachus, "and I think from Alexandria. Those who are welcoming them are undoubtedly Alexandrians."

As he spoke the first boat drew near the shore, and the sailors hastened to assist in unloading it. Rich tapestries, jewels of all kinds, birds with strange plumage, and curious figures covered with gold, were one after another placed along the shore, and then carefully raised from the ground by the bearers. But before their work was finished another boat, even more gaily ornamented, came alongside the first one, and several of the sailors on the shore eagerly rushed forward to it.

"It seems," said Melaneia, "to be someone of importance ; and hark ! the boat song of the rowers has turned into a hymn. You have keener sight than I, Father ; the man who is stepping out of the boat seems to wear some ecclesiastical dress. Who can he be ?"

Slowly the crowd below divided to permit the strangers to

pass between them; and as the procession came nearer, skirting the lower part of the hill, Telemachus almost involuntarily descended a few steps, so as to get a clearer view of the approaching figures. Although he was at too great a distance to distinguish the faces, all the other details of the figures stood out clearly in the bright summer sky as the procession wound round the first hill of the promontory, and prepared to enter the gates of the city. Suddenly Telemachus drew back once more with a shudder, and said in an awestruck voice, half to himself and half to Melaneia, "It must be he himself!"

"Who?" asked Melaneia, startled by the change in his tone.

"Our enemy Theophilus," answered Telemachus.

"Ah!" said Melaneia. "The most daring and unscrupulous of the tools of Hieronymus. Think you that he comes to beard the Patriarch in his own dominion?"

"I know not why he should do so," said Telemachus, who had heard nothing of the defiant answer of Theophilus to Chrysostom's appeal. "I know that the Patriarch wished to speak him fair, and to try to pacify his fury against us."

Melaneia laughed scornfully. "As well try to pacify a tiger or a wolf! But this is a strange story to tell of the Patriarch John! I have ever heard of him as bold and defiant against the oppressor and tyrant. But perchance he was waiting for news from Rome. When he shall know that there is no further help from thence, he will doubtless feel the necessity for more decided action. I will go to him forthwith and tell him how things stand at Rome."

So saying she turned away and hastened in the direction of the Patriarch's palace. Telemachus remained for a few minutes gazing, with a sort of horrible fascination, on the procession which was still entering the gates below; then he made his way down into the city by a rather more

circuitous route than that by which Melaneia had descended. After some turns he suddenly found himself by the long wall of the public building, which he easily recognized, although he had not seen it from that side before, as the wall which shut in the Hippodrome. Instinctively shrinking from what had always been pointed out to him as an accursed thing, he turned aside into a stately hall, which stood close by. This hall was paved with stone and distinguished by one or two fine statues, but more still by a large cross that stood in the middle.

Not far from the cross was a long line of people, mostly girls, who seemed to be the object of great attention to some richly dressed citizens, while near them stood coarse-looking and gaudily dressed men, who, in a loud voice, were setting forth the special excellences, physical, mental, and moral, of their particular charges.

Telemachus had some dim recollection of the slave-market at Alexandria; and it was not difficult for him to understand, from some of the phrases that he heard, what was taking place. He was hurrying on in disgust when his attention was arrested by the sound of words, uttered quite close to him in a strange language, which yet seemed to recall some old memory. He turned instinctively, and saw a young woman who was standing rather apart from the crowd and leaning against a statue of Apollo. She was gazing upwards, as if not observing the throng around her; and, even to those who did not understand the words, the attitude seemed to suggest the utterance of prayer. The fair hair and blue eyes quickened in Telemachus the recollections which had been already kindled by her words; and after a moment's hesitation he turned to her and said, "Are you not a Goth?" The words were uttered in the Gothic language, and the girl started as he spoke. She fixed her eyes on him, and then exclaimed half distrustfully: "But you are no Goth?"

"No," said Telemachus; "we monks are of no race. But I knew a Goth whom I loved much. It is some years since I heard your language."

"Ah!" said the girl, "you are a monk, and to judge from your speech you come from Egypt. Perchance," she said in a hesitating voice, "from Nitria."

"I do," said Telemachus. "Is there anything in which I can help you?"

"How now, sir monk," broke in a rough voice; "do you desire a Christian sister to live the sisterly life with you?"

"Nay," said another man drawing near, "the Patriarch will scarce suffer that now. It was but yesterday that he excommunicated two of his clergy for using their Christian liberty in that way."

"The Patriarch," said a third, who had recently entered, "will not be able to enforce his power much longer. There is one who has come to Constantinople to-day who will give him trouble enough in holding his own position, and will leave him little time for interfering with the private affairs of others."

"Yet they say that the Patriarch himself," replied the first speaker, "can give private audiences to fair ladies when he has a mind."

The Gothic girl had shrunk back during this dialogue, and seemed trying to shield herself from the coarse gaze of the speakers. Telemachus, ignorant of many of the scandals of ecclesiastical life, had hardly understood the first taunt of the slave-dealer; but the reference to the Patriarch caused a momentary flash of indignation. He turned indignantly on the first speaker and exclaimed: "And think you that the scandal-mongerings of the followers of Theophilus will avail to injure the saintly Patriarch? Let those who think so beware in time, before they reap the reward of their evil thoughts."

The tall, commanding figure of the monk, set off by the

simple dress which he still wore, awed the gaudily dressed crowd ; and even the slave-dealer was silenced for a moment. In his wanderings through the empire the man had heard more than once of the power of the monks of Nitria ; and though strangely confused in his own mind as to the source of that power, the tradition, however uncertain, co-operated with the attitude and tone of Telemachus to give new force to his words. Telemachus was still standing, quivering with the excitement of his indignation, when he felt his robe gently pulled, and as he half turned round the girl whispered to him :

" Is the Patriarch of whom you speak the holy John, who was here two years ago ? "

" Yes," answered Telemachus.

" Then tell him," said she, " that you have seen Elfrida, the daughter of Rodomir and Bertha, in the slave-market of this city."

Telemachus paused a moment. The thought of appealing to Chrysostom had already crossed his mind, knowing that he was always willing to grant from the revenues of the bishopric assistance to the poor and oppressed. The faith in God which the life in the monastery and the study of Origen had implanted so deep in Telemachus, had almost unconsciously developed, since his expulsion from Nitria, a readiness to act in emergencies, and a certain confidence of demeanour which now stood him in good stead.

Drawing the slave-dealer aside, he entreated him not to dispose of this slave until he had communicated again with him, assuring him that he could secure for him a better customer than any he could find in the hall at present. The man was still too much under the impression produced by Telemachus's first outburst to refuse such a proposal outright ; but the very earnestness of the appeal recalled the trader to the sense of his own interests, and the necessity for making a stand for them ; and as he looked thoughtfully round the

hall, weighing the chances of the bargain, he became aware of a kind of stir which was going on near him. At the unwonted sight of a meeting between this ascetic-looking figure and the Roman slave-dealer, a general whisper ran round the spectators who stood nearest ; and they suspended their bargains in their interest in this strange conference. Their notice weakened for a moment or two the effect which Telemachus's manner and words had produced on the slave-dealer, and he began to speculate on the causes that could have prompted this remarkable offer. On the one hand, he knew only too much of the corrupt lives of many of the clergy in Constantinople ; and though he had not heard that this corruption had extended to the monks, his belief in the lower sides of human nature would have led him to suspect that such could be the case. He had heard, indeed, of clergy and other benevolent people who exerted themselves in the liberation of captives ; but though he could have believed in the disinterestedness of such exertions where the captives were the relatives of the liberator, he felt somewhat sceptical about the matter where, as in the present case, the intending purchaser so evidently belonged even to a different race. Yet unexpected actions, springing from unexpected motives, were chances for which a shrewd trader would naturally make allowances ; and while he was weighing the possibilities, he noted the general interest which the conference was exciting. Then it flashed upon him that, whether or no the monk had the power of making so advantageous an offer, it would at least enhance the price of the slave to take advantage of the supposed mystery of this conference, and to throw out dark hints as to the splendid offer which he had already received, and which would hinder his parting with the girl at anything but the very highest price. He therefore promised to suspend the sale for the space of an hour and a half ; but he said this in such a hesitating and reluctant

manner that Telemachus half suspected his intention; so suddenly assuming his former tone he drew himself up to his full height and, stretching out his hand, exclaimed, "Remember I am acting in the name of one who can punish as well as reward." The words seemed to burst from him half involuntarily, and had he been cross-examined he might have found it difficult to say whether he intended the slave-dealer to tremble at the authority of the Patriarch, or at that of the higher Power in whose service Telemachus felt himself to be acting. But the intensity of conviction with which the threat was uttered, and the commanding gesture by which it was accompanied, produced a different effect on the mind of the slave-dealer from that caused by the monk's first outburst. It now flashed upon him that the monk was acting on behalf of some powerful courtier of Arcadius, if not on that of the Emperor himself, and he hastily reiterated his willing acceptance of this period of delay.

Telemachus left the hall and hurried at full speed to the palace of the Patriarch. He found several persons waiting for an audience, and some of them whispering eagerly and discontentedly. As the monk entered on one side of the room, Serapion came in from another. On the occasion of his previous visit to Chrysostom, Telemachus had been rather repelled by the stern and suspicious looks of the deacon; but he had no time now to think of his personal dislike, and knowing that his best hope of gaining a speedy audience was by winning the deacon's confidence, he went up to him and poured out as much of the story as he thought it necessary to explain. To his great surprise the deacon responded readily, before he was half through; and saying in a low and hurried voice, "You shall see the Patriarch directly," disappeared into the inner room.

The voices in the adjoining room rose for a moment, so that the words were almost distinguishable by those who were

waiting outside ; and then Serapion reappeared and beckoned to Telemachus to enter. Melaneia was sitting not far from Chrysostom, and had evidently been speaking with some eagerness and impetuosity. She scarcely gave Chrysostom time to greet the monk before she broke out with, " I am glad you are come, my Father ; I have been trying to persuade the holy Patriarch of the uselessness of any compromise with Theophilus. He should at once appeal to the Emperor to keep a watch upon him ; and at the first sign of his interfering with the jurisdiction of the Patriarch, he should have him arrested. What think you of this counsel ? "

Chrysostom listened with curiosity to hear what Telemachus would say. He, for his part, was extremely embarrassed at the sudden appeal, and answered, " It is not for me, lady, to advise the holy Patriarch in such matters ; but assuredly," he added, seeing that Chrysostom desired him to proceed, " I see no grounds for hope that Theophilus will ever listen to reason or justice."

Chrysostom smiled sadly. " It would ill become me," he said, " after waiting so long to decide this matter, not to give Theophilus an opportunity of explanation, now that he has actually come into the city. But it was scarcely with reference to Theophilus, my son, that you wished to see me."

Telemachus thus encouraged hastened to tell the story of the Gothic maiden, mentioned her appeal to the Patriarch, and eagerly entreated Chrysostom for help. Chrysostom started at the mention of Elfrida's name, and at once promised that assistance should be given from the episcopal revenues ; but then immediately recollecting himself, he added, " but I must first call my treasurer, and see how our finances stand at present."

" Small need of that, Father," said Melaneia, " if Your Holiness will permit me to put my purse at your disposal, I think I can provide enough to meet the demands of yonder

extortioner; and if he should not be satisfied with that, I have relations who will back me if necessary."

"Nay, my daughter," said Chrysostom gently, "one who has been brought a prisoner to this city should be freed by the funds of the city; and from what you have told me of the state of Rome, your money may be needed by those nearer to you in the coming troubles of that unhappy city."

"Let Rome perish!" exclaimed Melaneia, fiercely. "And as for my granddaughter, I have renounced her as a disobedient child, since she refused to leave her husband and his accursed city and devote herself to the higher state of virginity."

"Now God forbid, my daughter!" said Chrysostom, recoiling in horror. "God forbid that you should do so great a wrong as try to separate husband and wife. For myself, I doubt if any cause can justify such separation; but assuredly no fancied preference for another state of life can excuse it."

"How, Father?" said Melaneia in amazement. "Do you speak thus scornfully of the life of virginity; you, whose eloquent utterances in praise of it are known throughout the Church; and this, too, in presence of a holy monk of Nitria?"

"Even so, my daughter," answered Chrysostom, somewhat sternly. "I, who have shown due honour to monks and virgins, am best fitted to maintain and defend the holy state of matrimony, and woe to any woman who will preach the contrary to her children!"

"Be it so," answered Melaneia bitterly, "then as I can neither help you with money, nor with counsel, I take my leave." And with a haughty inclination of the body she swept out of the room.

Chrysostom smiled sadly as he watched her retreating figure, then turned to summon the treasurer, of whom he had already spoken.

On inquiry it appeared that most of the revenues of the year were already devoted, either to the relief of the poor, the building of hospitals and schools, or some similar purpose. Telemachus looked up with anxiety and terror as each new item seemed to weaken his hopes, but Chrysostom did not despair ; and suddenly turning to his attendant said, " Were there not a pair of gold candlesticks and an altar-cloth presented to the Church of St. Sophia yesterday ? "

" Even so, my Father," answered the treasurer.

" Go then with this monk and offer these ornaments to the slave-dealer," said Chrysostom, " I scarce think he will refuse such a price."

The treasurer started, and seemed about to remonstrate ; but Chrysostom waved his hand impatiently, and then, turning to Telemachus, added, " Until we can decide how this girl is further to be disposed of, you must conduct her to the lady Olympias, and ask her, for my sake, to take charge of her till I can show her further of the matter."

The treasurer, a stately and rather important man, walked slowly along towards St. Sophia, muttering as he did so about the strange fancies with which the Patriarch seemed to be seized at times, and expressing a fear that this too might be used against him by his enemies. Telemachus continually urged him to hasten his steps, fearing that they would be too late at the slave-market ; and this fear was further increased by an uncomfortable doubt as to the honesty of the man with whom he had to deal ; especially as he was sure that some of the young nobles who were hanging about the slave-market would do their utmost to secure the prize for themselves. He had not realized the effect which his final threat had produced, a threat, indeed, which had so startled the slave-dealer that he had taken the precaution to put the girl into a more retired part of the hall, where she would less attract the attention of intending purchasers. Accordingly it was with some anxiety that

Telemachus, on reaching the slave-market, noticed the absence of Elfrida from the place where he had left her. But the slave-dealer at once recognized the monk; and seeing that he was accompanied by someone of importance he came forward eagerly to greet them, and dwelt with unction on the care with which he had preserved the girl for his distinguished customers. His eyes glistened with greedy eagerness when he saw the price which was offered; but at the same time the appearance of the altar cloth obviously suggested its original purpose; and, as he took it in his hands, he gave an evil leer at the monk and said, "Your holy patron is a bold man, sir monk; but I can keep secrets as well as another."

"There is no secret," answered Telemachus scornfully; but the treasurer pressed his hand and whispered, "Perhaps it is as well that this matter should not be known too widely in the city."

The slave-dealer did not catch the words, but he noticed the eager whisper and leered again as he brought forward the maiden. She too saw the look on her former owner's face, and started back as she said to the monk, "What is your will with me?"

"We have ransomed you from slavery," answered Telemachus, "by the authority of the Patriarch." He had not thought well hitherto to mention Chrysostom's name in connection with the matter; but he was provoked by the sneer of the trader, and still more by the treasurer's ill-judged air of secrecy, and he felt that the utmost frankness would probably be the safest course. He added immediately, "And we will take you at once to the house of the lady Olympias."

The slave-dealer smiled at Telemachus's bold avowal of the Patriarch's connection with the transaction; but the manner of the monk, even more than his words, gave confidence to the girl, and she followed her liberators willingly.

## *CHAPTER X*

# *NEW HOPES FOR THE FUTURE*

"Then said Evangelist, pointing with his finger over a very wide field, 'Do you see yonder wicket gate?' The man said 'No.' Then said the other, 'Do you see yonder Shining Light?' He said, 'I think I do.'"

JOHN BUNYAN.

THE house of the lady Olympias was at no great distance from the Patriarch's palace. It was built, like most of the early houses of Constantinople, on the model of a Roman villa; and the large and handsome reception-hall was decorated with pictures, statues, and beautifully carved tables, in accordance with the taste of the time; but the absence of the rich carpets, which were commonly seen in such halls, indicated the ascetic disposition of the owner; and the dress of the servant who came out to meet them, though graceful and richly coloured, was free from that excessive ornament which the wealthier classes of Constantinople delighted to display in everything that belonged to them.

While they rested in the hall, Telemachus had time to notice, with some surprise, that the figures of animals on the walls were all familiar to him, being chiefly drawn from Egyptian models. The ibis and the crocodile were prominent, while among other pictures the lotus plant was more often to be observed than any European flower. He could not help recalling the prophecy of the priest of Memphis, of the ultimate triumph of Egyptian thought;

and he wondered whether, in the great city whose image was always haunting him, and the memory of which had been recalled to him that day by Melaneia's prophecies, this same Egyptian worship was to triumph alike over Roman and Christian traditions.

He was roused from these meditations by a rustling sound near him, and the lady Olympias stood before them. She was dressed far more meanly than any of her servants; nor was it only the poor character of the material and the plainness of the colour which was remarkable; there was an air of almost determined carelessness in the whole arrangement of the dress. Yet, in spite of this neglect, the commanding dignity and beauty of the figure at once struck all who saw her, while the absence of paint and of the excessive ornament, which was usual at that time, made more apparent the classic beauty of her regular features. Olympias was a little over forty years of age; but anxiety and sorrow had marked their lines on her beautiful face, and the hair, that fell back over her shoulders, showed signs of premature whiteness. At first sight, a slight haughtiness of bearing and a firm pressure of the lip, might have repelled a chance observer; but as she listened to the story which Chrysostom's treasurer unfolded, her eyes rested on Elfrida with a tender and motherly look, and she eagerly came forward to embrace her.

"Nay, my child," she said, as the girl would have shrunk back and made an obeisance, "we Christians must not permit these slavish signs of reverence. Besides, I too have had sorrow, and ought to know how to help the afflicted and oppressed. Tell the holy Patriarch," she said, turning to the treasurer, "that I will welcome this girl as if she was my daughter. And for you, reverend sir, let me offer you some refreshment before you return."

A few days later Telemachus was again summoned to an audience at the Episcopal Palace. "There seems little

reason," began Chrysostom somewhat abruptly, as the monk entered the room, "there seems little reason that I should still withhold in any degree my confidence from you and your fellow-monks. Since he has been in the city, Theophilus has not only refused to have any intercourse with me, or to listen to any proposals for a just trial of his cause, but he has gathered round him all those who have any complaint against me; not only such as I may have offended by infirmity of temper, but even those whom I have punished for sins against God and the Church. Moreover, he hath scattered gifts lavishly in the city that he may draw to his side all the avaricious and greedy men of whom, God knows, there are too many here; and, as I understand from some to whom he has made advances, he almost openly avows that he cares little now for his quarrel with the monks of Nitria, but only for vengeance on myself. I see not, therefore, why I should any longer delay to send you forth on the mission to which you seem to be called, and for which the recent discovery of this Gothic girl gives a new opportunity."

He paused for a moment, and then, seating himself and directing Telemachus to a couch near him, he proceeded: "It is well that, before you go on this mission, you should know somewhat of the story of her whose fortunes seem to have connected themselves so strangely with your work, and whom you have been instrumental in rescuing from a life of misery. I know that you have heard something of the cruel persecution which was directed against the Christian disciples of Wulfila by the Goth Athanaric. His followers seem to have been even more cruel than he; and in the year 372 one of the smaller chiefs, who acted with him, resolved on a final effort for the suppression of Christianity. Huge Gothic idols were sent round to the tents of those whom they had reason to suspect of Christian leanings; and each family was called out in

turn to do homage to these idols. They all refused; and thereupon, being driven back into their tents, they were surrounded by the soldiers who, at the order of their chieftain, set fire to the tents. Men, women, and children were burnt to death. A few, however, had managed to remain outside, and amongst these were Rodomir and Bertha. They wandered out through the night, hardly knowing, at first, whither they went, and utterly uncertain for a long time whether their enemies were, or were not, pursuing them. At last, after several days wandering, faint with cold and hunger, they reached the Danube and succeeded, after some difficulty, in finding means of transport to Mœsia. There they were welcomed by Wulfila and their kinsmen, and established in villages at the foot of Mount Hœmus, not far from Nicopolis. Wulfila now persuaded many of them to abandon their former wild life, and to live like peaceable Christian men and women, working with their hands and tending their flocks and herds. Men talk," said Chrysostom, breaking off abruptly, "of the heresies of Wulfila! Would God that those who are more perfectly instructed in Christian doctrine could do half as much as he in establishing the Kingdom of God upon earth! As for myself, after all my prayers and efforts here, I sometimes doubt much if I have won one soul to the following of Christ."

He paused, much agitated, and then abruptly resumed: "It was then, during this happy stage of their lives, that the girl, whom you have seen, was born to Bertha and her husband. Though they were both agreed in approving the teaching of Wulfila, and in endeavouring to retain the simplicity of their old Gothic life, while abandoning its fierceness, there was evidently a difference between them from the first. While Bertha was strengthened by the horrors through which she had passed in her dislike to the savagery of the old life of fighting and rebellion, in

Rodomir, on the other hand, those memories had rather produced a bitterness and secret desire for vengeance which only needed time and opportunity to develop into that same fierce and warlike spirit which Wulfila had endeavoured to check. Alas! the opportunity was given at last, not by heathen Goths, but by subjects of this civilized Roman Empire, by men who called themselves Christians. I know not if you heard in your monastery the story of the arrival of Fritigern and his followers in Mœsia; how, weary of the tyranny of Athanaric, and trusting to the promises of the Emperor Valens, they took refuge in the Eastern Empire; and how that confidence was repaid by extortion, treachery, and massacre. Rodomir, stung by these wrongs, and in spite of the entreaties of his wife, joined the forces of Fritigern, and took part in the battle of Adrianople. Then came the short interval of better times. The Catholic Emperor Theodosius—be his name ever blessed!—tried to restore the breaches in the Church and the Empire, and won the nobler part of the Goths to his side. It was during this time that Rodomir and Bertha came to the court of Constantinople, accompanied by their daughter, then in the first bloom of her girlish beauty. I remember, though I was then but a poor priest of Antioch, that I was sent on an embassy to this city, and saw both her and her mother.

"Among the many who were attracted by her beauty was Eurymedon, a rich senator, and a man of evil life, who had gained much of his wealth by plundering the provinces. He longed to win the hand of this Gothic maiden; but neither Rodomir nor Bertha liked the alliance, and the maiden, besides their grounds for dislike, had soon a reason of her own for rejecting his offer. A Gothic youth had just arrived at the court who had many claims to the consideration of his countrymen. His father had died fighting under Fritigern, and he himself had only escaped by the warning of a

friend from that cruel and treacherous massacre of the Gothic youths who had been entrusted as hostages to the Roman governors. After such an experience of Roman faith, he had naturally lived in a state of great uncertainty and alarm; and, after a short time of concealment, he had, by the advice of the same friend who had saved him, taken refuge in the monastery of Nitria."

Telemachus started up at the words and exclaimed, "Eric!"

"Even so, my son," answered Chrysostom. "Eric, the son of Wulfhere, whom I think you knew in the monastery. It appeared that he resented, while there, some unwise words uttered against Wulfila; and, hearing of the death of Athanaric, and the favour of Theodosius to the Gothic race, he had come to push his fortunes at the court of Constantinople. I never saw him at that time, or since, for I was soon recalled to Antioch, and when I was finally chosen to this bishopric, affairs had changed for the worse. Theodosius was dead; and our present Emperor, acting under evil advice, had provoked the Goths once more into revolt. Part of them, under Alaric, saw no hope save in an absolute life and death struggle with the Empire; others, like Gainas, hoped rather to control the policy of the Empire, and turn it to their own account. When Gainas marched to Constantinople and demanded the surrender of the senators who were opposed to him, I, as you may have heard, was one of those who were sent out to try to pacify him, and to persuade him to withdraw his extremer claims. At that time, Gainas was making what alliances he could with the nobles of the city, and amongst others with that Eurymedon of whom I spoke. Eurymedon demanded, as the price of his support, the hand of Elfrida, and Gainas was using all his influence to induce Rodomir to yield to the proposal. Bertha, who was still in Constantinople,

urged me to save her daughter from this fate, adding besides that she was betrothed to Eric the son of Wulfhere, who had recently gone to join the army of Alaric in Italy. I saw Gainas, and, by God's mercy, he was induced to listen to my entreaties. Not only did he grant the lives of the senators, who were opposed to him, but he also consented to abandon his support of Eurymedon's suit. Rodomir, however, not feeling secure, shortly after marched with his followers to join Alaric in Italy, taking his daughter with him. The mother, agitated by fears for her husband and daughter, increased by confused and doubtful rumours of their fate, finally succumbed to her troubles, and died, adjuring me with her last breath to show protection to Elfrida, if she should ever need it. Rodomir was cut off, defeated, and killed, before he could join the main body of the army. His daughter was taken prisoner in the camp, and carried to Rome, where she was sold to the slave-dealer, in whose hands you saw her. He found that the Romans were still too panic-struck with fear of Alaric to venture to purchase a Gothic girl ; so he brought her, as you know, to this city. Here, however, she must not remain. Amongst the men to whom Theophilus is making advances is the senator Eurymedon ; and the fact that I have been the means of her deliverance from slavery will make both Eurymedon and Theophilus more eager to seize their prey. Moreover, I understand from the lady Olympias that Elfrida has a great longing for news of her lover ; and I cannot but hope that, since she has no prejudice against the Catholic faith, and since she is likely to lead him to a gentler life, much might be done, through her means, towards that conversion of the Goths which we both desire.

" And as for you, my son," he added, tenderly laying his hand on Telemachus's shoulder, " I cannot but think that you are called to some great service for God and the Church ; perchance to this very work of the conversion

of the Goths to the Catholic faith. And yet——" He paused for a moment, but before he could complete his sentence a tremendous shout, followed by the noise of blows, struck on the ears of both. Telemachus turned, half involuntarily, and looked out from the window of the room in the direction from which the sound had come. He could dimly catch sight, across the wall of the Hippodrome, of a struggling mass of men and horses, and all the signs of disorder and riot. "Ah! my son," said Chrysostom, "in Rome, too, you must beware of these scenes of license and tumult. In Constantinople you have seen enough of these evils; but Rome has even darker deeds to show. Here men sacrifice their time to debauchery and lawlessness, or fight fiercely on small grounds of quarrel; but there they take delight in bloodshed for its own sake, and find their amusement in the sight of murders. I need not tell you that Christians shrink from such scenes as these; but there are many nowadays who take the name of Christian while they keep the heart of heathens." Then, seeing the scared face of Telemachus, he added, "Be of good cheer, my son; the strength of God and of a good conscience may be with you in Rome as in Nitria. It is not the place where we live, but the manner of our lives which concerns us.[1] And now as to the method of your setting forth; Eusebius, a deacon of this church, with certain devout brethren, is about to start for Rome with letters from me to the bishop. Some pious ladies of Constantinople have a desire to visit the shrines of St. Peter and St. Paul. A stout bodyguard of labouring men, some from the mountains of Rhodope and some who have followed me hither from the villages near Antioch, will be a better escort to the party than the debauched soldiers of Arcadius could have been, and will be less likely to attract attention, or involve you in needless

[1] *Ὀυ τόπος ἀλλὰ τρόπος*, a favourite pun of Chrysostom.

quarrels ; but you must start at daybreak from the Golden Horn, and sail for Heraclea, where your escort is awaiting you. Thence you will make your way through Macedonia and Epirus to the port of Dyrrachium, whence you must take ship to Italy. And now, my son, farewell ; I have given you but few directions for your work ; for I see but little of what lies before you. It is not likely that we shall meet again on earth. It is certain that there are trials coming for both of us. May we meet where all trials are over and all difficulties are solved." So saying, he embraced Telemachus tenderly, and they parted, never to meet again.

It remained for Telemachus to take leave of Pambo and his fellow-monks. He had indeed communicated to the Abbot already some of the intentions of Chrysostom with regard to his mission to Rome, and had received Pambo's sanction to the proposal. But Ammonius had been inclined to remonstrate ; and Telemachus feared that, even at this last hour, some opposition might be raised to his departure. How he should act under these circumstances he could hardly tell. The sense of the moral duty of monastic obedience was dropping from him, but its power as a habit still partially remained ; and, in this confusion of mind, he prayed earnestly that guidance might be given to him, and that he might see his duty clearly.

Fortunately he was to be spared the struggle which he feared. He found Pambo alone and looking very weary. "Ah ! my son," said the Abbot, "you are very welcome. The good brother Ammonius has but now left me. I cannot think that he judges aright of the Patriarch. He condemned him, at first, for refusing to communicate with us ; and now he declares that the withdrawal of his prohibition is due rather to his desire for revenge on Theophilus than to a sense of Christian duty."

"I cannot think so," my Father, said Telemachus very

earnestly. "The holy Patriarch ever desired to befriend us; but he feared to create a scandal in the Church by quarrelling with Theophilus. Now that Theophilus has clearly shown his hostile purpose, the Patriarch feels that he is absolved from responsibility for the quarrel; and he may now show to us the friendliness that he has ever felt towards us."

"I believe you are right," answered Pambo; "yet I cannot but be thankful that Theophilus has abated much of his hatred towards us, and especially that he will suffer Ammonius and me and some others to return to die in peace on Mount Nitria."

Certain words about the "tender mercies of the wicked" rose to Telemachus's lips, but he suppressed them as he looked at the worn, sad face of the Abbot; and he answered, "I rejoice, my Father, that you should find peace and rest after this stormy time."

"But for you, my son," said Pambo sadly, "Ammonius thinks that the favour which the Patriarch has shown you will exclude you from the chance of this return. How!" he exclaimed, seeing Telemachus's eyes sparkle with delight. "Are you then so glad to be free of us?"

"God forbid! my Father," said Telemachus eagerly; "but the holy Patriarch has work for me in Rome, and I had feared that you would oppose my journey."

"Ah," said Pambo, "then your dream is at last to be realized! Well, be it so; you have borne dutifully the burden of obedience while it was laid on you; may you act as nobly when you have to stand alone."

Telemachus knelt to receive the old man's blessing, and then hurriedly left the room.

As he returned to his own lodging he meditated much on the events of the day. The parting with Pambo, though painful, had relieved his mind; and he felt freer to consider the course that lay before him. Melaneia's

utterances about the condition of Rome had brought back the old thoughts which had first been kindled by Jerome's conversation; and the terrible warnings of Chrysostom, scarce half understood, seemed to mingle with the fiercer denunciations of Melaneia to throw a dark gloom over the place which he so longed to see; but, instead of repelling him, these sad forebodings rather seemed to draw him on still more eagerly towards the doomed city. That strange hope that he might do something to save it from its ruin, mingling with that other desire, which had never died out, for a meeting under happier circumstances with his friend Eric, tended to convince him that some great crisis in his life was approaching. And, as he fell asleep at night, there came over him once more the sense of a vision, somewhat like those which he had seen in Nitria.

The sound of the crash in the Hippodrome, which he had heard that afternoon, seemed to be somehow haunting his brain; but he found himself standing, not at the palace window, but in the middle of the struggling crowd. Suddenly, the place appeared to enlarge around him, and he was in a magnificent building, which he had never seen before. Tiers on tiers of seats rose on all sides of him, and they were filled with people whose eyes were all fixed on him. He felt that he was called upon to do something, but, before he could realize what it was, the scene had all melted away; only there sounded in his ears the words which he had read in Origen's exhortation to martyrdom, "A great theatre is provided for us who strive and who are called to martyrdom. . . . The whole world, all the angels both on the right and left, and all men, both those on God's part and the others, will listen to us as we fight the fight for Christianity. And the angels in Heaven will be gladdened over us; and the rivers will clap their hands, and the mountains will exult, and the trees of the plain will

applaud with their boughs at the sight; or else, which God forbid, the Powers below, which exult in evil, will find their cause for delight."[1] And as these words seemed to float away in a strain of music, he sank into a deeper sleep which lasted till dawn.

[1] *Μέγα Θέατρον συγκροτεῖται 'εφ' ἡμῖν ἀγωνιζομένοις καὶ ἐπὶ μαρτύριον καλουμένου . . . Ὅλος οὖν ὁ κόσμος καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι δεξιοὶ καὶ ἀριστεροὶ, καὶ πάντες ἄνθρωποι, οἵ τε ἀπὸ θεοῦ μερίδος καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν λοιπῶν, ἀκούσουσι ἡμῶν ἀγωνιζομένων τὴν περὶ χριστιανιομοῦ ἀγῶνα. Καὶ ἤτοι οἱ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἄγγελοι ἐφ' ἡμῖν εὐφρανθήσονται, καὶ ποταμοὶ κροτήσουσι χειρὶ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ ὄρη ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ τὰ ζύλα τοῦ πεδίου ἐπικροτήσει τοῖς κλάδοις ἤ δ μὴ ἔιη αἱ κάτω δυνάμεις αἱ ἐπιχαιρουσι κακοῖς εύφρανθήαονται.*

*CHAPTER XI*

## A STRANGE ADVENTURE

"We defy augury; there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow."

SHAKESPEARE.

IT was with somewhat mixed feelings that Elfrida heard of Chrysostom's plans for sending her to Rome. Eager as she was to meet her lover once more, and painful as were many of her associations with Constantinople, she yet felt a natural reluctance to leave the safe haven of the house of Olympias, and face the perils of a return to Italy, where she had already suffered so terrible a fate. Yet she braced herself up to the emergency, the more readily that she, too, felt that her duty was in some mysterious way calling her to Rome.

Olympias, on her part, though her feeling for the Gothic maiden was rapidly becoming one of warm affection, was not sorry, both for her own sake and Elfrida's, that she was to be relieved of a charge so precious and so dangerous. Her years of widowhood, and her struggle to protect herself from second marriage, which had even brought her once into collision with the strong will and arbitrary methods of Theodosius, had developed in her a power of taking interest in the affairs of others, which had been purged more and more from any weakness and selfishness. Moreover, she saw the troubles that were gathering round Chrysostom and the Church of Constantinople; and she

desired to be free to devote her wealth and energy to that cause, unhampered by any other claim, however attractive. Besides this, she knew, far better than Elfrida could do, the dangers which beset the Gothic maiden in that city. It was she who had warned Chrysostom that Eurymedon had not abandoned his intentions towards her ward. She had sought out Theophilus, and had endeavoured to lead him to a more pacific mind ; and it was during one of her interviews with him that she had seen the dreaded senator. Whether he had actually ascertained Elfrida's presence in Constantinople Olympias did not feel certain ; but he had dropped hints and insinuations which alarmed and offended her.

It was, then, with heartfelt thankfulness that Olympias embraced Elfrida on the day of her departure. "You have done well," she said, "to remain faithful to your hopes for your future husband. None can honour more than I do the pure and heroic life of the monastery ; yet there is a knowledge and wisdom, which even the weakest and most foolish of us women may derive from the love of a husband, that the most saintly of nuns, the most learned of monks can scarcely attain to. And I have sometimes guessed that our holy Patriarch thinks the same."

"Yet," said Elfrida, with a lingering tone of regret, "it seems ungrateful to be leaving you, who have shown me such friendship, in a time which you say will be one of trouble and anxiety ; and especially since I go to seek my own happiness far apart from you."

"Nay, my child," answered Olympias, "it is not mere happiness that you go to seek. That is never to be found for the seeking. Your duty calls you as much to help your future husband in this world, as mine to be faithful to him who is gone. And do not think we shall be parted afar, while we can still help each other with our prayers. But here comes your escort. I will accompany you to the

top of the hill, that I may bring certain news to the Patriarch of your safe departure."

Carefully muffled in their cloaks, and guarded by their escort, the women were proceeding through by-ways to the top of the hill, where Telemachus had met Melaneia some weeks before, when suddenly Telemachus, who was a little in advance of the others, gave a cry of surprise, and pointed to the shore of the Bosphorus. Not far from the boats which were waiting to receive them lay three or four of a much larger size, with their many-coloured sails spread to the wind, bright coverings stretched on the deck ; and near them a number of men in the rich dress of the nobles of Constantinople. The party paused and considered.

"It seems to me," said Olympias, "that I and my servant, who may be well known to some of those on shore, should return home, lest we should attract too much notice ; the rest, I think, may without danger embark, while the attention of these people is occupied by their own friends."

This arrangement was accepted ; and Olympias watched with anxiety the little band descending the hill towards their boats. While she was still gazing, she was startled to hear her name uttered behind her, and, turning round, she found herself face to face with Theophilus. Bowing with an air of courtesy, which evidently covered very different feelings, the bishop remarked :

"The lady Olympias walks late. Can I bear any greetings for her to her friends at Chalcedon ?"

"Chalcedon !" repeated Olympias in astonishment. "Is Your Holiness, then, leaving Constantinople ?"

"Even so, most illustrious lady," answered Theophilus. "The friends of the Patriarch are at present too strong here to allow of justice to those who have unfortunately offended him. But in Chalcedon, perhaps, the champions of the Catholic faith may yet obtain a hearing."

"The Catholic faith," answered Olympias, "can scarcely find a nobler champion than the Patriarch of Constantinople."

"The Catholic faith as interpreted by Origen," replied Theophilus. "But we in Alexandria think we can judge of these things better without the dictation of the overweening bishop of a city which has robbed Alexandria of its rights, both temporal and spiritual."

Before Olympias could answer, a cry arose from the boats below, and looking down, she saw one of the Alexandrian sailors engaged in fierce contention with a boatman of Eusebius' party. "Hasten," she said to her servant, "and see who are hindering the passage of our friends." The man hurried down the hill, at his mistress's bidding, and Olympias watched the scene with eagerness.

"The servants of the lady Olympias," said Theophilus, resuming the cutting tone with which he had begun the conversation, "are ever at the service of her friends. But there are other ladies in Constantinople who perhaps choose their friends more wisely, or who know how to punish the friends who change to enemies."

"What mean you?" said Olympias, astonished and startled at these words.

Theophilus fixed his eyes on her with a wicked gleam as he answered, "I speak of a lady of such high rank and influence, that even the lady Olympias would hardly dare to face her displeasure. But my friends below are waiting for me. In return for the hospitality you offered me I would give you a parting warning in all friendship. Do not cling to a falling tree, which may whelm you in its ruins, but which you cannot save." So saying, he made a low reverence, and hastened down the hill.

In the meanwhile, the contest at the boats had become more serious. As one of the boatmen of Eusebius' party was lifting in some of the necessaries for the voyage, he

jostled one of the Alexandrian boatmen. The latter, who had been drinking hard, turned round with a fierce oath, and struck the other. A quarrel seemed likely to ensue, which might hinder the pushing off of the boat, when one of the subordinate members of the party, less informed than its leaders as to the need of secrecy, bade the Alexandrian beware how he injured the friends of the Patriarch. The servant of Olympias, arriving just at this moment, plucked at the cloak of the speaker, and warned him to be secret. But the action, instead of producing its effect, only called the attention of those who were near; and Theophilus, hastening down the hill, shouted to them to stop the boat.

Telemachus, in an authoritative manner, ordered the boatman to push off, hurriedly placed Elfrida and the other ladies in another boat, and was himself about to spring in after them, when he felt his arm roughly seized and, turning round, he found himself in the grip of Theophilus. The memory of that terrible night on Mount Nitria flashed back upon him, and for a moment he trembled with horror, and turned pale.

"Ha!" said Theophilus, "we have met before. You are one of the Origenist snakes whom I thrust out of the convent of Nitria."

"And you," said Telemachus, recovering his courage at this attack, "are the murderer of our brother Anacletus."

At the mention of the name of the young monk who had been killed in the attack on the monastery, Theophilus turned pale in his turn, and dropped the arm of the monk. Telemachus seized the opportunity to spring back into the boat, and before Theophilus had fully recovered himself it had been pushed some feet from the land.

But in her anxiety, Elfrida had partially dropped the cloak which was screening her, that she might see the issue of the struggle between her preserver and the bishop. At the same moment one of the senators, who had been

watching the lading of Theophilus's boats, approached the scene of the contest ; and the eyes of Eurymedon encountered those of Elfrida. Wild with fury, he darted to the edge of the shore and beckoned to the boatmen to come back, but Telemachus sternly ordered them to proceed ; and Eurymedon, at first frantic with passion and disappointment, could not sufficiently collect his mind to consider what should be done, but ran up and down the shore gesticulating and cursing.

Theophilus, absorbed in his own passions, did not at first understand that Eurymedon had any other cause for vexation than that which irritated himself ; but after a few moments the senator's exclamations of "Elfrida !" "Traitor !" "Robber !" caught his attention ; and he eagerly asked Eurymedon whether he had some complaint of his own against the monks.

"That girl, most holy Theophilus," cried the senator. "Bring back that girl, Elfrida !"

"But have you any claim on her, most illustrious Senator ?" asked Theophilus. Willing as he had been to make use of very low tools in carrying out his schemes of greed and ambition, he was not prepared to assist in the designs of a profligate like Eurymedon without greater cause than seemed apparent at the moment.

"But it is my betrothed wife, promised to me by her guardian, and the Emperor, whom these minions of the Patriarch are carrying away."

"Ha !" cried Theophilus, his eyes gleaming with delight, "another scandal against our holy Patriarch. Let us man a boat at once and pursue. Or stay !" he added, for he knew Eurymedon too well to trust his word absolutely ; "were it not better to appeal to the Emperor, and summon the Patriarch before him to answer for his robbery ?"

"No ! no !" said Eurymedon, "let us instantly pursue."

But the boat which lay nearest was insufficiently manned for such a chase. With a curse Eurymedon was turning back from the shore when he saw some dark, hook-nosed men hastening down the hill. "Ha! those Jews will do anything for money," he cried, "and they are right good oarsmen." He hastened towards them, jingling his purse, and eagerly explained his need. A short whispering in Hebrew followed, in which one man seemed to raise difficulties, then they all turned to Eurymedon and accepted the offer on condition of partial prepayment. He handed them part of the money and sprang eagerly into the boat with a shout of triumph, and they pushed off at a rapid pace.

The rowers of Telemachus's party heard the shout, and redoubled their exertions to escape; but the boat hired by Eurymedon was better manned, and it gained steadily on the fugitives. They had started an hour before sunset, and as the front boat rounded the curved shore of the Golden Horn, they, for some time, lost sight of the pursuers. Telemachus stood near the prow, looking calmly in the direction of their enemies; the strong sense of his mission had come back on him with vivid force, and he felt more like a conqueror than a fugitive. His confidence lent courage, for the moment, to those around him; but, when the pursuing boat suddenly reappeared, a cry of alarm burst from one of the women. Instantly, as if by an uncontrollable impulse, Telemachus raised the psalm "Why boastest thou thyself, thou tyrant?" and Chrysostom's deacons quickly took up the words. The light of the setting sun fell on the face of the young monk and spread with a splendid glow over the horizon. The boat of Eurymedon steadily gained on the fugitives, and Elfrida pressed her hands together with a mingled expression of hope and fear, as she looked on the face of Telemachus. But, just as the last rays of the sun broke forth in full glory,

gilding the churches and houses of Constantinople, and seeming to illumine the depths of the waters of the Bosphorus, a cry of indignation was heard from the boat of Eurymedon, and, looking back at their pursuers, the fugitives could see that seven or eight of the rowers had thrown down their oars. Eurymedon and the other rowers cursed at them in vain. They answered him in a strange language and pointed to the sunset. It was the evening of a great Jewish sabbath, and the Jewish sailors had refused to row further, all of them being determined not to work on that day.

Telemachus and his friends were of course unaware of the cause of their deliverance, and thought that a miracle had been worked on their behalf; so, as their boat shot out into the Propontis, they changed their psalm of defiance into one of thanksgiving, while Eurymedon, railing and cursing, was forced to give up his useless enterprise, and to return to the city.

*CHAPTER XII*

# THE OLD GODS AND THEIR WORSHIPPERS

> Jove, that right hand is unloaded,
> Whence the thunder did prevail;
> While, in idiocy of Godhead,
> Thou art staring, the stars pale;
> And thine eagle, blind and old,
> Roughs his feathers in the cold;
> Pan, Pan, is dead.
>
> ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

ON a September afternoon, in the year 403, two men were lounging in a beautifully furnished villa at Baiæ. In the middle of the court, where they lay, a fountain was scattering its spray about; tables, exquisitely carved, stood in various parts of the room; in one niche was a silver model from Phidias's bust of Zeus; while a winged marble figure in another corner represented the genius of the family to which the owner of the villa belonged. The owner himself, a middle-aged man, dressed in the gown of a Roman senator, was carefully studying a roll of parchment, which he held in his hand. Other rolls lay near him on the table, to which from time to time he referred. His broad face, and clearly cut features, indicated a vigorous, practical power, joined with a hearty enjoyment of life; while a slight curve of the upper lip suggested a possibility of scorn which might, on occasion, be dangerously used.

The other occupant of the room was a man somewhat younger than the senator; he was dressed in a richer robe,

showing more of the extravagance of the time; and in his face the traces of traditions of Eastern mysticism strangely contended with an eager love of life and intense sensitiveness to outward things. His eyes were fixed with an anxious look upon his companion, and the quick flush which came and went on his cheek showed a somewhat painful interest in the subject of conversation.

"Yes, my dear Claudian," said the senator, "I do not deny that your verse has more of the ring of the old Roman worshippers of the muses than that of most writers of our degenerate days. Yet there is something in Ausonius' poetry which seems to come nearer the Virgilian touch than you generally attain to. Listen to this line," and he took up another MS. from the table: "Æmula te Latiæ decorat facundia linguæ." The reader rolled the line upon his tongue as if enjoying it; but he was startled by a sound of irrepressible irritation from his companion, who half started from his couch as he said, "I marvel that you, Quintus Symmachus, a Roman by descent, and proud of the glories of Rome, can enjoy verses written in praise of a barbarian river, and, as it seems to me, in mockery and dispraise of Rome!"

Symmachus looked up with a good-natured smile, as if in easy tolerance of the envious irritability of the poet; then answered more gravely, "You are right, Claudian; Ausonius, in spite of his Roman kinsmanship, has still too much of the traditions of the barbarian about him. You, under the influence of an older civilization, have better appreciated the greatness of Rome." And, returning to Claudian's poem, he read, in a stately and thoughtful tone, the concluding line, "Discite vesanæ Romam non temnere gentes."

There was silence for a moment, and then Symmachus, laying down the poem, turned to the poet and said, "And yet, after all, I cannot but remember at times

that it is the victory of a Barbarian over Barbarians in which we are rejoicing."

An indignant flush passed over the face of Claudian, and this time he sprang to his feet and, raising his hand as he spoke, exclaimed, "Ungrateful man! if you expect Ausonius and me to Romanize our thoughts and verses, can you not recognize the Roman virtue, I had almost said more than Roman, of the general who has delivered Rome from a greater danger than any since the time of Hannibal, and who has more claim to rank with the Neros,[1] Fabii, and Scipios of the past than any of those degenerate Romans who carp at his greatness."

"You are right, Claudian," answered Symmachus sadly. "Yet I could well wish that Stilicho carried his Roman feeling a little further still, and that he owned the greatness, not only of Rome, but of the gods who protect her. When the Senate has consented to the overthrow of the altar to Victory, and has allowed the Flamens and Vestal Virgins to be stripped of their goods, there is indeed little ground for complaint that we have to trust our armies to barbarian leaders. Yet how long even these will preserve Rome, if Jupiter and Vesta desert her, it may perhaps be doubted."

"Why doubt it, most excellent Symmachus?" said Claudian, "while Pollentia witnesses to the overthrow of Alaric and the destruction of the Gothic nation; nor surely is it Stilicho, whom you must blame for the dishonour done to the Roman gods. I understand that, so far as he has power, he has mitigated the rage of the Christian priests, and many of them hate him bitterly for it."

"Yet," said Symmachus, "they say that when my great antagonist Ambrosius died, Stilicho spoke of his loss as an injury to the Empire."

[1] Of course, this reference is to the Nero who won the battle of the Metaurus,

"And was not that," cried Claudian, "a touch of Roman virtue, that would honour an opponent worthy of his steel. By Pollux! that same bishop had much of the old Roman stuff in him, whether he worshipped our gods or not."

"Our gods, Claudius!" said Symmachus, looking sarcastically at his friend. "Yet I hear that you too have been writing poems in praise of the gods of the Christians, and even in celebration of their festivals."

Claudian laughed, though with some sign of embarrassment. "We poets," he said, "know little of these theological fights. We worship beauty and valour, whatever names they may take on themselves. And now, I bethink me," he added, as he saw Symmachus's eyes fixed on him with a peculiar expression, "that there was a time when even Quintus Aurelius Symmachus was glad to take refuge in a Christian church,[1] and to appeal for protection to the superstitions of a Christian Emperor."

Symmachus's face grew red with indignation at this taunt. He rose to his feet and paced the room, controlling with difficulty an irritation of which he felt half ashamed, while the poet watched with terror the signs of the anger that he had provoked. An awkward silence followed, which was broken by the entrance of a slave announcing that a monk, who seemed by his speech to be an Egyptian, had lately arrived from Constantinople and desired to speak with Symmachus.

"Ha!" said Symmachus, "an Egyptian! Perhaps he brings news of the crocodiles which were to be sent for the games; and yet it is strange that they should have trusted a monk in the matter. But admit him instantly."

[1] Symmachus took part in the rebellion of Maximus; and after the overthrow of the usurper he took refuge in a church in Rome and was pardoned by Theodosius, apparently in recognition of the right of sanctuary.

Telemachus entered, looking somewhat dazed and confused by his long journey, a confusion which was still further increased by Symmachus's immediately appealing to him about the transport of the crocodiles.

"Of crocodiles, most excellent sir," said Telemachus, "I know nothing; and I have seen none since I left Egypt more than a year ago."

"Pardon me, sir!" replied Symmachus, feeling both embarrassed and sorry for his mistake. "I have failed, I fear, in the duties of hospitality. Pray seat yourself, and my servant shall bring you some refreshment; then we will hear further of your business. It is not often that men of your profession deign to visit a worshipper of the old gods like myself."

"I came," said Telemachus after a pause, somewhat embarrassed in his turn by Symmachus's confession of faith, "in the hope of seeing here a friend of the Roman general Stilicho, who might help me to gain information, from him, about the fate of one in whom I am interested."

Claudian flushed with delight at the suggestion, but Symmachus answered with amazement, "Are you not aware, sir monk, that Stilicho is away with his army in the north of Italy? Do you propose to disturb him, even in the camp, with your business?"

"Were it necessary," answered Telemachus, "I would willingly go to him, even on the eve of a battle; but I have just heard that he is on his march southward, after having defeated the Goths a second time at Verona."

"Now the gods be praised!" cried Symmachus and Claudian together; "though the news," added the latter under his breath, "seems to come by a strange messenger."

Before they could ask further, another slave entered announcing a messenger from Rome with dispatches for Symmachus. The senator eagerly seized them, and read

in them the confirmation of the new victory. After a pause he said, "I find in these dispatches that Stilicho's last victory seems to have been even more complete than that at Pollentia; but there will be a necessary delay in his return to Rome, especially as he is a candidate for the consulship and as the senate may desire to vote him a triumph. But it is probable that he will be within a short distance of Rome before the close of the year. If, therefore, you have friends in Rome, your best plan will be to await his arrival there, unless your business is too urgent."

Telemachus paused. "I think," said he, "that I will consult with my friends as to the best course of action; but in the meantime I would pray you, if you should think fit, to give me letters to the general, which I may deliver to him either in the camp, or wherever our meeting may take place."

Symmachus looked at him a little distrustfully. "I scarce know," he said, "if you will find him at leisure for such conference as you may desire; and you must pardon me for saying that I ought to know more of your business before I can ask Stilicho to give you an audience."

Telemachus coloured and looked down. He felt that he ought to have foreseen some such request as this; and yet it suddenly flashed upon him that this haughty senator, already prejudiced against him as a Christian monk, might be doubly suspicious if he found him taking a friendly interest in the fate of a Goth, and that, too, a soldier who might even then be bearing arms against the Roman Empire. But the embarrassing pause was broken by Claudian.

"I think, sir," he said, "that I was probably the friend of Stilicho to whom you were directed, and may I not ask whether you are not an Alexandrian? For it seems to me that your speech smacks of that city."

"I was born in Alexandria," answered Telemachus, "though I have left it for so many years that it is strange that my speech should still recall my birthplace."

"Then, by Isis!" exclaimed Claudian, "you shall have a letter for Stilicho, were it only for the honour of the Queen of the East. I, too, was born on the Nile; and I am glad to meet a brother from the old country, even though he be a monk. Where do you lodge in Baiæ?"

"I and my friends," said Telemachus, "are staying at a house a little beyond the town, the villa of Quintus Piso. We were intending to go on to Rome, unless we should hear of some nearer means of communication with Stilicho."

"Come, then," said Claudian, "my villa lies in your direction; we will walk together; and I will give you this letter to Stilicho. Farewell, Quintus Symmachus. I presume you, too, will return shortly to Rome to discuss with the Senate how these victories are to be honoured."

Symmachus had been somewhat startled at the turn that the conversation had taken; but he was never disposed for long to be angry with Claudian, whose caprices always amused him; and the cause of their former quarrel had been completely banished from his mind by the news of the victory at Verona. He therefore took leave graciously of his guests, and assured Telemachus courteously that, if he could do him any service consistently with his duty as a senator, he should be most happy to assist him.

Claudian and Telemachus passed in silence down the richly flowering garden and out into the main road. Then the poet resumed the conversation. "You see, brother," he said, "these haughty Romans have ever need of us Alexandrians to turn their rough thoughts into suitable words, so it was perhaps as well that you applied to me for your letter to Stilicho."

"And think you," said Telemachus rather anxiously,

"that this general will be willing to listen to a petition on behalf of a Goth?"

"A Goth!" exclaimed Claudian in surprise. "Some prisoner, no doubt, in whom you have taken an interest. Why, for that matter, there are those in Rome who will not scruple to say that Stilicho loves his Gothic enemies better than his Roman friends. But the truth is, he loves strength and valour wherever he finds it, and now that he has soundly beaten the Goths for their presumption, I doubt not that he will be willing enough to show mercy to any who may deserve it. But look there, brother! What do you say to that as a proof of the power of Egypt over Rome?" And he pointed to an inscription over one of the villas that they were passing: "Te tibi una qua es omnia dea, Isis."[1]

Telemachus read the words with astonishment, and again there came back to him the Egyptian priest's prophecy about the ultimate triumph of his faith. Had then the Christians done nothing more for Rome than to pave the way for her return under the power of this old creed? The momentary sense of despair produced by this thought was at once thrust down again by the hopes that had been growing in him ever since he had left Constantinople. But though the prospect of victory for the Christian faith seemed the more certain, that his own mission was becoming clearer, yet the language of Claudian suggested to him the probability of new difficulties in the approaching interview with the Roman general. He spoke with hesitation, as hardly knowing how his questions would strike his companion.

"But," said he, "if you are no Christian, surely Stilicho, at least——" he paused, in some embarrassment.

[1] This votive inscription is from a stone now in the Museum of Naples. It is cut in large letters and in six short lines ending with the name ARRIVS BALBINUS, V.C. (C.I.L. X. Berlin 1883).

"For me," replied Claudian, "I fancy I am as good a Christian as many of my neighbours. I invoke in my verses all the gods, from whom I can hope to gain a hearing, whether Egyptian, Roman, or Jewish; and I have written verses on Christian festivals which are liked by many of your clergy and monks."

"And Stilicho?" repeated Telemachus, too interested in his inquiry to feel deeply shocked at the frivolity of his companion.

"Stilicho," replied Claudian, "is the general and upholder of an Empire which, ever since the time of Constantine or, I should rather say, of Jovian, has been looked on as the bulwark of Christianity. Zosimus, who aspires to be one of the chief champions of the old creed, hates Stilicho sorely; is not that reason enough that he should be loved by Christians?"

Telemachus was silent. He felt anxious and confused about this new world into which he had entered. In Constantinople heathen customs and heathen superstitions had always been carefully veiled by Christian forms and phrases; but here it seemed that the champions of the old faith spoke their mind boldly and almost scornfully; nay, they seemed almost disposed to grant to Christians that contemptuous tolerance, which must surely imply a certainty of victory. Yet, after some deliberation, Telemachus found that he could not accuse himself of having betrayed or compromised his faith, in his interviews with the enemy; and he felt that his duty to Eric involved the necessity of using all means of approaching him, which did not imply actual recognition of heathenism. So he accepted Claudian's introduction to Stilicho, and hastened to report to Elfrida his hopes of a speedy communication with Eric.

*CHAPTER XIII*

## THE VISION GROWS CLEARER

> Strange voices heard,
> The dark and shadowing visions of the night,
> And feelings which I may not dare to doubt,
> These portents make me certain of the God
> Within me.
>
> SOUTHEY.

NEXT morning Telemachus and his friends set out for Rome, travelling by slow stages. Elfrida and the other ladies were conveyed in bullock-wagons, while the rest of the party went on foot. On the evening of the tenth day, looking across the Campagna, they first caught sight of the city in the distance lighted by the rays of the setting sun, and of a soft line of purple hills beyond. As they came nearer, Telemachus was surprised to see, rising above the walls of the town, an obelisk. The sight recalled his life in Egypt; and again the prophecy of the old priest rose to his mind. Just then he heard Elfrida call him, and going to the side of the wagon he saw her pointing eagerly to a massive stone gateway, under which they were about to enter.

"See," she cried, "this is the gateway through which the holy Paul was led to execution!"

Telemachus felt a thrill of joy at the thought that he was at last entering the great city, which for so long had been only a dream to him; and Origen's words about martyrdom came again into his mind when he realized

that he was actually treading the same road up which St. Paul had passed.

He was so deep in these thoughts that he did not at first perceive that a little band of friends were coming towards them to welcome them. Some of these had already received letters announcing the approaching arrival of the deputation from Constantinople, and were eager to show hospitality to the friends of Chrysostom. Eusebius and the other priests and monks were escorted to a house not far from the Forum, while the women of the party had been provided with a lodging near the well-known settlement of nuns on the Aventine.

When, on the following morning, Telemachus waited on Elfrida to discuss with her the plan of his future action, he found her in conversation with a strange lady in a nun's dress.

"We know," the stranger was saying, "that many of your nation have accepted the Catholic faith. But we would willingly urge upon you, for the honour both of your people and of the Church, that you should try to attain to a yet higher stage of excellence, to throw off altogether the union with the world, and live the perfect life of virginity. You have heard, doubtless, of our settlement on the Aventine and of the testimony before God and man which we have been able to bear in favour of the higher life."

"But," said Elfrida, when the torrent of her visitor's words had ceased, "I am already betrothed to a countryman of my own."

"All the more honourable," replied the eager lady, "will be the completeness of the sacrifice which destroys these worldly bonds to produce a closer union with Christ."

"We Goths think not so," answered Elfrida, "nor are these the ideas of faith and honour which we learned from the holy Wulfila."

"Ah!" exclaimed the lady, "that Wulfila was your schoolmaster to bring you to Christ, I doubt not; but he could scarce guide you in this matter as well as one who is more fully instructed in the Catholic faith. This reverend father," said she, turning to Telemachus, "will doubtless confirm what I have said."

"Not so," said Telemachus, "if I have understood your question aright, marriage is also an honourable state, and this lady has duties which bind her to her future husband as strongly as those which bind some of us to the state of virginity." As the nun stood astonished at his words, he continued: "I can testify that I have seen more than one, even in Nitria, who took up the monastic life thoughtlessly, and without due call to the same, and left it as hastily, or endured it in a spirit quite other than that of a true monk."

Before he could speak further the lady suddenly broke in. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "you are a monk of Nitria; possibly you are one of those who are tainted with the heresies of the great misleader Origen."

"I thank God," answered Telemachus, "that I have often gained health and strength from the lessons of that great teacher."

With a look of loathing the nun of the Aventine drew back her dress, as if fearing contagion, and swept from the room without another word. Telemachus turned eagerly to Elfrida and at once explained the object of his visit.

"I fear," he said, "that I may have offended some of our brethren by holding intercourse with the enemies of our faith. But I trust that He who judges rather by the spirit than by the letter will pardon me if I have erred in this, since I have surely done nothing unlawful in accepting a letter of recommendation from a heathen poet to the General of the Roman armies. I believe, nay, I am sure, that I said nothing to lead him to think that I was

prepared in any way to compromise my faith, though it may be that I listened too calmly to his heathen mockeries."

"And you purpose," said Elfrida, "to set forth at once to the camp?"

"On that point," answered Telemachus, "I would desire to consult further with some of our Christian friends who may know aught of the general. But I would ask, lady, if I should find Eric in the camp, what greetings I may give him from you?"

Elfrida did not immediately answer; something seemed to be troubling her mind, which she did not like to utter. At last she suddenly broke out, "Father, believe me, you did him injustice."

"Injustice to whom?" exclaimed Telemachus in surprise. "To Eric?"

"If there was aught of rashness," said Elfrida, without answering directly, "in his retirement to the monastery, he did it in the ignorance of youth and on the advice of others; he thought of it rather as a place of refuge from oppression than as a residence for life, whose rules were to be for ever accepted by him."

Telemachus stood astonished at this eager outburst. "Surely, my daughter," he exclaimed, "I have said nothing in blame of Eric. I would rather own, in all sincerity, that had I done such work as I have had to do as faithfully as he has performed that which he believes to have been committed to him, I should feel nearer to the Kingdom of God than I do."

"Thank you, my Father," exclaimed Elfrida warmly, "and yet, no! Do not think that Eric or I can ever hope to attain to the standard of holiness which we have seen in you."

"Enough! enough! my daughter," said the monk, with some impatience, turning away. "Let us not waste in idle compliments the time that is given us for action.

Once again I ask, have you any greetings to Eric, if I should find him a prisoner in the camp of Stilicho, or hear news of him in the army of Alaric?"

"Tell him that I pray for him daily," exclaimed Elfrida, "and that, wherever he should find himself, I entreat him to do nothing unworthy of our Christian calling. But, Father, deal gently with him for his sake and mine; he loves and honours you; and I think you can guide him aright if you will."

The first errand of Telemachus, when he left Elfrida, was to the house of the Christian poet Prudentius, to whom he had been specially commended by Chrysostom. The poet welcomed Telemachus courteously and listened with eager pleasure to the Patriarch's hopes for the conversion of the Goths, and with kindly sympathy to the story of the loves of Eric and Elfrida. But, when Telemachus proceeded to ask for letters of recommendation to Stilicho, Predentius' brow clouded.

"I would gladly help you in this, Father," he said, "but they tell strange things of this general. They say he scarcely concurred in the policy of the noble Theodosius and of our present Emperor Honorius, for the destruction of the temples of the idols, that his son Eucherius is an avowed worshipper of the heathen gods, and that Stilicho's own life is not such as beseems a Christian."

"Yet I see not," said Telemachus, "how I can obtain news of Eric save through this general, for it would scarce answer my purpose to go direct to the Gothic camp."

To his surprise, Prudentius answered in a hesitating tone, "Perhaps that would be neither safe nor politic. Yet from what we hear of the circumstances of the battle of Pollentia, it might seem that Alaric has more reverence than Stilicho for the Catholic faith; for they say that the Christian Goths were celebrating the Easter festival when Stilicho came upon them by surprise. But yet! you are

right! Stilicho, for good or for evil, is the general of a Christian Emperor and a partially Christian Senate. We must act through him and, if it be necessary, I will give you a letter to him, since I knew him when he was last in Rome. But there was little love between us, and it were well for your cause if you could get your letters elsewhere."

"To say the truth," answered Telemachus, with some hesitation, "I have already one letter, but it is from a man who knows me but slightly; and I would not willingly go under his auspices if I could find a more suitable introduction. I speak of the poet Claudius Claudianus."

Prudentius drew a long breath and stepped back in amazement. "And may I ask," he said, "how you have so quickly become acquainted with so strange and unlikely a friend?"

"I saw him," replied Telemachus, with still more embarrassment, "at the villa of the senator, Quintus Aurelius Symmachus."

"Symmachus," gasped Prudentius, "then indeed——" he paused for a moment, and sat down; then he rose again, with an air of determination, and crossing the room to where Telemachus sat, he laid his hand on the monk's shoulder and said, in an emphatic tone: "Pardon me, sir! You holy monks of the desert may well give us advice in the deeper things of the faith, but, as an older and more experienced man, and one who knows better the difficulties of Roman life, I may perchance give you some hints in matters of worldly wisdom. I doubt not that it was with the best intentions that you ventured into the house of Symmachus; but you know not what evil tongues can say and do in a city like Rome, where there are many (aye, even some of the clergy) who play fast and loose with their Christian professions; and where many of the heathen feign to accept the Christian faith because they see it is welcome at court, and likely to lead to honour.

Whoever, therefore, advised you to apply to Symmachus for assistance or guidance of any kind, took advantage of your simplicity, I speak it in all reverence, of your holy simplicity, and betrayed you into a position which might cause scandal to the Church. Yes," he added, after a moment's pause, " I will give you a letter to Stilicho, that this scoffing Vandal may not say that a holy monk of Nitria needed the help of a heathen poet, and of a senator who is the avowed enemy of the Christians, to gain his first step towards the conversion of the Goths to the Catholic faith."

Prudentius then proceeded to give Telemachus some advice about the best methods of reaching the camp at Verona, specially warning him to start early in the morning and to travel by daylight, and giving him some suggestions as to the resting-places on the road.

Telemachus left him with a somewhat disturbed mind. That he should be about to set forth to the camp of the great general of the Roman Empire might in itself have seemed a sufficient cause for anxiety and excitement. Like so many monks of the time, he looked upon the military profession as in itself somewhat anti-Christian ; and, though on the whole he desired success to the Roman arms rather than to those of the Goths, his friendship for Eric, his acquaintance with Elfrida, and perhaps more than all the half-tender anxiety which Chrysostom cherished towards the Gothic nation, prevented him from feeling that intense antipathy which the ordinary Roman or Byzantine might have entertained towards enemies of the Empire. Moreover, the Goths were beaten, finally overthrown, some of his informants seemed to think ; and, like all the better men among the clergy, he considered that the function of a Christian ecclesiastic was, above all, to plead for mercy. The same feeling which had brought the monks of Nitria down to Antioch to protest against the vengeance of

Theodosius on the destroyers of the Imperial statues, which had prompted Chrysostom in his protection of the fallen Eutropius, which had inspired Ambrose, not only in his celebrated condemnation of Theodosius, but in his less known rescue of the criminal from the hands of Stilicho, that feeling which both for good and for evil was to produce so great an effect on the Christian Church was now working strongly in Telemachus' mind. And yet he could not get rid of a doubt whether this desire to help the oppressed, and to show kindness to his friend, was leading him to the point at which Chrysostom desired him to aim—the conversion of the Goths to the Catholic faith; nor did he clearly see how his personal services to Eric were to be combined with those more important services to Rome to which his early longings and his frequent visions seemed to point.

Deep in these meditations, he was strolling, half unconsciously, through the already crumbling buildings of the Forum, when a figure suddenly emerged from behind one of the still remaining heathen altars. Telemachus started back in astonishment, but in another moment he had recognized the deacon Eusebius.

"Ah, Telemachus!" exclaimed the deacon, "are you contemplating the place from which the altar of Victory has lately been removed? That was, indeed, a triumph for Christians, which at one time we hardly expected to win."

"The altar of Victory?" repeated Telemachus somewhat dreamily; "that sounds indeed a relic of heathenism. But, if my eyes deceive me not, there are signs of heathen victory still on yonder arch." And he pointed in the direction of the Arch of Constantine.

"That," said Eusebius, "symbolizes the victories of the great Emperor Constantine."

"Ah," said Telemachus, "it was doubtless erected

while he was still hesitating whether to support the gods of the heathens or to accept the worship of Christ. It reminds me of that statue in Constantinople about which men doubted whether it was meant for Christ or for Apollo."

"Constantine," replied Eusebius, "was doubtless but an imperfect Christian during much of his life, whatever my famous namesake might wish to prove. Yet we must be thankful that he overcame his enemies, since thereby he secured peace and freedom to the Christian Church, even as we may exult in these defeats of the Goths, though we doubt the Christian faith of Stilicho."

"But think you," said Telemachus, "that the Goths will be more willing to accept the Christian faith after their kinsmen have been slaughtered by Romans, and that too, as I hear, on a festival of the Church?"

"The Goths!" repeated Eusebius. "Nay, I know nought of their feelings, and truly it was not well done of Stilicho to attack them at Easter. But think you, Telemachus, that Alaric and his followers will really listen to the preaching of the One Substance when their minds have been corrupted on the one hand by the heathen traditions, and on the other by the teaching of Wulfila?"

"I think," answered Telemachus, "that if Stilicho could show mercy and justice to them, even as Theodosius did, much might be done for their salvation. It was not by force of arms that Theodosius won them to the Roman cause; nor was it by the sword that our Patriarch John persuaded Gainas to mercy and forbearance; nor do I think that Alaric or any of his followers will listen to Christian teaching, while we treat them as enemies to be ensnared and destroyed. But tell me, Eusebius, what is that large round building that stands on our left? I have a strange feeling that I have seen it before."

"That," said Eusebius, "you can scarce have seen

before, nor anything like it; though if, as I understand, you go to Stilicho at Verona, you may possibly see the like of it again. In that place are done, as I hear, all kinds of abominations for the amusement of the frivolous populace of Rome."

"What!" exclaimed Telemachus. "Then it is even as the Hippodrome at Constantinople? Yet it looks far statelier."

"A stately palace of Satan," answered Eusebius; "and they say that even worse things than Constantinople can show are to be seen there."

"Ah!" replied Telemachus. "I have a dim recollection that the holy Patriarch hinted something of certain horrors that I should hear of in Rome."

"Nay," said Eusebius, "it is not well that Christians should know too much of these evil things. They are said to have a most terrible and fascinating effect on the minds of young men not accustomed to them. One who is now a rising light in the Church has described how, in his youth, he was persuaded against his will to be present at one of these horrible scenes of bloodshed, and how he seated himself in the theatre, closing his eyes that he might not see the spectacle that was to appear before him; how the sudden shout of the crowd forced him to open his eyes, and as he saw and watched the savage fights of the men, in whose bloodshed the mob was delighting, there came over him the same fierce joy in cruelty and love of bloodshed which filled the crowd around him, and instead of turning away his eyes, he seemed to suck in a mad rage of delight in the cruelty and to go mad with the luxury of blood; so that he even grew fiercer and more savage than those who had compelled him to enter the theatre."

Telemachus shuddered at the description, and the awe-struck voice in which Eusebius gave it; but at the same moment there came back to him the memory of his vision

in Constantinople; and he knew that the great building which he had then seen was now before him. He felt also, by an unmistakable instinct, that it was there that he would realize his desire to do something to save this great city, with its splendid traditions, from the curses which Jerome and Melaneia had prophesied against it; there, too, that he should be able to give help to Eric and Elfrida, and to testify to them and their race on behalf of the Catholic faith.

While Telemachus thus gazed, in a state of rapt bewilderment, on the building which was to be so identified with his fate, Eusebius, in vain, endeavoured to continue the conversation by some general remarks on the dangers and corruptions of Rome; till at last, observing the silence of his companion, and catching sight of the absorbed expression of his face, he exclaimed in terror, "Come away, Telemachus! lest the demons below, to whom Prudentius says that yon place is consecrated, should gain power over thee, and draw thee to it, as the holy Patriarch has told me the demons of Antioch had power to draw their victims into the foul and lascivious groves of Daphne, until the bones of the holy martyrs overcame them."

"And may not," said Telemachus, still speaking half-unconsciously, "may not some sacred martyr intervene to counteract here the demon of cruelty as the martyr of Antioch defied the demon of lust?"

"God grant it!" answered Eusebius. "But let us beware how we run heedlessly into temptation." So saying, he drew the monk away from the scenes of heathen greatness; and they returned to the house, where the emissaries of Chrysostom were staying.

*CHAPTER XIV*

## IN THE CAMP

"More soluble is this knot
By gentleness than war. . . .
What were I nigher this, altho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults?"

TENNYSON.

IT was after a long and hazardous journey that Telemachus came in sight of the walls of Verona, within which the Roman camp was pitched. The sentinels, astonished at the strange dress and wild appearance of the Nitrian monk, were half inclined to suspect him of being a Gothic spy; but when he produced the letter of Claudian, and mentioned that the writer was a poet who had written verses in praise of Stilicho, the soldiers laughed, and thinking that such a man must be at least harmless, one of them consented to take the message to Stilicho's tent, bidding Telemachus remain with the other sentinel till he had leave to approach the general.

Stilicho was sitting in his tent, half armed, and dictating a dispatch to a secretary. As the soldier entered, he looked up with a genial smile, and exclaimed, "How now, Caius? Have you come to cut short our writing and to summon us to the fight again?"

"No, General," answered the soldier, "I bring you more writing, and, as I understand from the bearer, it is likely to be in verse."

Stilicho laughed. "Now the Saints preserve us!" he

exclaimed. "They had better put off their verse-making till the Goths are safe out of Italy. But let me see this precious missive! Ha! it is from my old friend Claudius; but, as I judge from the lines, he has deigned to write in prose this time. Listen, Marcus!" he exclaimed to the secretary. "Here is a model for your imitation," and he read as follows:

Claudius Claudianus to the most excellent and ever victorious Stilicho, health and greeting! All Rome exults at the news of thy victories; Senate and people hail thee as the saviour of the republic, and the shade of Marius envies the destroyer of the Goths, a nation more dangerous to Rome than the Cimbri.

"The destroyer of the Gothic nation," exclaimed Stilicho with a laugh, half amused, half irritated. "It will take more than your polished lines, my Claudius, to prove that the Gothic nation is destroyed while Alaric lives. But, see! here is more. Ha! what is this?"

The bearer of this letter is an Alexandrian monk, whom welcome for my sake and that of his city. He longs to do honour to the preserver of the Christian Empire; and, as he has I know not what friend among the captive Goths, he trusts that the mercy for which he knows thee to be famed will now be shown in the moment of victory, since thou rememberest that our Roman rule is as much

*parcere subjectis* as *debellare superbos*.

May the gods preserve thee in health and bring thee back to thy friends and to Rome. Farewell.

"The rogue never knows whether to play the heathen or the Christian," said Stilicho, laughing. "But waits the monk without?" he said, turning to the sentinel.

"Lucius Carbo guards him at the gate," replied the other. "We judged it not safe to allow him to approach your Excellency until we were better assured of his purposes."

"Tut!" exclaimed Stilicho. "What cause have I to fear monks? Am I not, as Claudius reminds me, the

champion of the Christian Empire, not to mention that I am also the father-in-law of the most Christian Emperor."

"But this monk," persisted the sentinel, "looks not like these solemn and decorous men whom we have seen in Rome. He wears an untanned sheepskin, and there is a wild look about him, like some of the Goths who have but lately come from Dacia."

"The better!" cried Stilicho. "I have more sympathy with these wild fellows, at bottom, than with those whimpering drones who waste their time in Rome and prey upon the poor. Go, fetch him, and bring me some wine that I may entertain him worthily. But to think Marcus," he went on, as the sentinel departed, "that this foolish Claudius, and the yet more foolish senators of Rome, should believe that the Gothic nation could be destroyed in one battle, or even in twenty! Now God forbid!" he exclaimed, as he raised himself to his full height and walked up and down the tent, "now God forbid that these Goths should be destroyed! I tell you, Marcus, they are as necessary to the world, and to the Empire, as many a hundred of these degenerate Romans."

"It were not well," said Marcus, "that the senators should hear your Excellency say so. Your enemies are but too ready to cry out that you are over-friendly to Alaric, and no true friend to the Empire."

"Fools that they will say so!" cried Stilicho. "If I did not love the Empire better than some of those who slander me, why should I have separated myself from my own race, and not rather have joined the Vandals with the Goths for the overthrow of the Romans? No! there is something in this Empire, with its old traditions and its power of law, which we rougher tribes have need of. But, by the bones of my father, they also have need of us! Ah! here comes the monk, a stalwart-looking man in good truth! How now, sir monk? I hear you have an errand to me

about a friend of yours among my prisoners. Let us drink to his health before we discuss his fate," and he held out to Telemachus the bowl of wine which had been brought to him.

"I thank your Excellency," said Telemachus, "but I drink no wine. And as for my friend, I know not in truth whether he be a prisoner with your Excellency, or still in the army of Alaric."

"You are bold indeed, sir monk," said Stilicho, with a smile, "to speak to the general of the Roman army of your friendship for one who may be in arms against Rome. But I like you none the worse for that. Some of your monks and priests would have made rare soldiers if they had but had the good fortune to turn their mind to it. You come from Alexandria, I am told. And yet," he added, before Telemachus could answer, "you scarce look like a citizen of that luxurious and effeminate city."

"I was born in Alexandria," answered Telemachus, "but I was taken, while still a boy, into the monasteries of the desert, and stayed there till I was driven out by force."

"It must have required much force," said Stilicho, "to expel a stalwart young hero like you. But how came you at issue with the rulers of the Empire? Was that a stroke of the villain Rufinus, or perchance of his no less worthy successor Eutropius."

"No," answered Telemachus, "it was no act of the lawful rulers of the Empire."

"No, I'll be sworn," cried Stilicho with some fierceness. "While the eunuchs of the palace were busy with their miserable intrigues, some lawless robbers were sweeping all before them in the provinces. But now to your business. Who, or what, is this Goth, who may be my prisoner, or may be——" he paused and added with a smile, "or may be my future conqueror?"

The secretary laughed at this suggestion. But Telemachus replied, without change of countenance, "His name is Eric, the son of Wulfhere."

"Ha!" said Stilicho, "that is a notable man, a notable leader indeed, and one whom we cannot part with lightly. You should have warned your friend, sir monk, that he should have stayed in Mœsia, and not have troubled the peace of Italy. Yet I would gladly do you a pleasure, for I like your look, nor do I wish to bear hardly on a fallen foe. You shall see your friend, and perhaps you may give him good counsel. But now I bethink me, how came you to the knowledge of my friend Claudius Claudianus? That was but a strange ally for a Christian monk."

The words struck upon Telemachus's conscience. He had already blamed himself for holding so much intercourse with the heathen, and forgetting that Stilicho was more likely to be moved by a friend like Claudian than by an almost avowed antagonist like Prudentius, he hastened to justify himself by mentioning the name of the latter and producing his letter.

"Prudentius!" exclaimed Stilicho, with an expression which Telemachus could hardly understand. "You seem to be in favour with the poets, sir monk. Perchance you expect a hymn of praise when you have passed into sainthood; but I trust that Prudentius, too, prefers prose to verse in writing to the general of the Romans. Ha! ha! this is indeed a different style from that of Claudius. Here is another model for you, my Marcus. But, by all the saints, it is not one that I would advise you to imitate too closely! Hear this":

Prudentius Aurelius Clemens to the most excellent Stilicho, greeting. The bearer of this is a monk who desires to save the life of a Christian Goth. I beseech you to remember that you are the general of a Christian Emperor, and to spare the shedding of needless blood, especially that of Christians. Many here have heard with shame, and

regret, that you have violated the sanctity of the Easter festival in your attack upon the Gothic camp, and that you may vindicate yourself before your enemies and prove yourself to be still an adherent of the Christian faith, I earnestly desire of you to set free, without fail, the Christian Goths who are in your camp; taking, of course, all due precautions that they shall no longer be an injury to the Roman State. Farewell.

Stilicho crushed the roll in his hand and took two or three strides up and down the tent before he spoke again. At last he said, "I wonder if the worthy Prudentius is prepared to punish me with future torments, or to join the intriguers at Ravenna who are trying to turn my son-in-law against me. Warn your friends, sir monk, that they may chance to crow too early! Stilicho is still general of the Roman forces, and still father-in-law of Honorius, and he will shortly be in Rome to celebrate his Triumph. Let our enemies look to it. But stay," he said, checking himself. "I gave you my promise that you should see your friend, and a Vandal's word should be worth something still, whatever a Roman's be. Go!" he said to one of the soldiers, who was waiting outside, "Conduct this monk to Eric the son of Wulf here."

Eric was lying in his tent, carefully watched by an attendant soldier, as Telemachus entered. The guards outside were more in number, and more heavily armed than those placed before the tents of the other prisoners; and as the Goth reluctantly rose at the entrance of Telemachus and his guide, his face showed a lowering look of fierce suspicion, from which the monk involuntarily recoiled. A strange expression of confused surprise passed over Eric's face when he saw his visitor, but in the next instant the present seemed to disappear, the past came vividly before them both, and the two friends threw themselves into each other's arms. Then suddenly Eric drew back and gazed upon his friend, exclaiming, "Ah, Telemachus! if

I had never known that life, or never left it, it would have been better for me."

"That you had never left it, dear Eric," answered Telemachus, "I could well have wished; and yet even that I can hardly dare to say, for there is one, at least, who feels that she would have been the worse had you remained in the monastery."

"Oh!" cried Eric, with something like a shriek, "you speak of Elfrida. She is, then, alive and well?"

"Alive, well, and safe," answered Telemachus.

"Thank God," exclaimed Eric, his face suddenly assuming a calmer expression. "Then you do not condemn me as having abandoned a higher life for a lower one?" He spoke with a smile, half sad, half humorous. But Telemachus answered, as usual, with perfect seriousness.

"No," he said, "God has fitted each man for the work which he has to do; and you, dear Eric, had doubtless no call to the monastic life, and may therefore live better as a husband and father in the world."

Eric pressed his hands together, and repeated the words, "As a husband and father!" Then, as if half ashamed of his emotion, and half amused at the persistent seriousness of his comrade, he added, "And yet you said but now that you regretted my having left the convent?"

"It was an idle wish," replied Telemachus, "perhaps even a profane one; and yet at the moment it seemed as if so much might have been prevented." He paused for a moment in thought, and Eric immediately exclaimed, "But what of Elfrida?"

Telemachus proceeded to tell all that he knew, either from observation or from Chrysostom's narrative. When he spoke of her having been seized in the camp and carried to Rome, Eric started to his feet, and seemed to feel for a weapon. One of the guards, as if alarmed at his attitude, drew nearer with a threatening gesture. Eric turned on

him with a look of sudden fierceness, which almost immediately changed into one of scorn; and then, turning his back in a marked manner on the soldier, signed to Telemachus to proceed. At the description of the scene in the slave-market at Constantinople, Eric's face again changed; but controlling himself, so as to avoid a second outburst, he laid his hand on Telemachus' shoulder, and said in a tone of concentrated anxiety and bitterness, "And how did they treat her?"

Telemachus shrank back. He pitied Eric; but at the moment the horror of the defilement from evil thoughts and feelings came strongly over him, more strongly than even the pity for his friend. In him, as in all men who were qualified to profit by it, monasticism had produced, not the prurient imaginations which often show themselves in monastic biographies, but the genuine purity of heart which came from the effort to see God face to face. This had, doubtless, been cultivated in him by the study of Origen's writings, strengthened by the later influence of Chrysostom, and confirmed by his intercourse with Elfrida and other pious women.

It was not, then, with a mere sense of monkish propriety, but with a genuine horror of impurity that he answered, "There are things, dear Eric, of which it is well not to speak."

The words had an opposite effect from what he intended; for Eric, alarmed at his evasion, at once suspected the worst, and seizing him vehemently by the shoulder, he exclaimed, "Answer, monk! These villains have not dared to——" He paused, with the word on his lips; but his face told all that he feared.

"No! no!" eagerly answered Telemachus, at once roused to a sense of his friend's suffering. "I merely meant that there were words and scenes from which one would willingly have saved so pure and noble a woman."

Eric looked at him searchingly for a minute, and then said, "You were right, Telemachus. Forgive me. But you said that she was safe. How came she to be delivered from this evil plight?"

"The holy Patriarch," answered Telemachus, "provided the means for her deliverance as soon as he heard of her condition."

"God bless him!" exclaimed Eric fervently. "If all Christian priests had been like him—— But there seems a gap in the story. How came you to discover who she was? and how was the negotiation between the Patriarch and the slave-dealer carried on? For I think the holy John has scarce leisure to frequent such places; and such foul vermin are scarce admitted to the Patriarchal palace."

Telemachus hurriedly explained his share in the transaction, considerably abridging the details, not so much from any self-conscious humility, as from a desire to avoid any lengthened reference to the scenes which so excited Eric. But the Goth easily understood the circumstances, and grasped his friend's hand warmly and silently. Then he asked, "And she is now safe in Constantinople under the protection of the Patriarch and the lady Olympias?"

"Not so," said Telemachus. "The Patriarch thought better, for various reasons, that she should leave Constantinople and proceed under safe escort to Rome."

"Then she is in Rome, and I shall see her!" exclaimed Eric joyfully. "But, oh God!" he added, a minute after. "How will she see *me*? A prisoner dragged through the streets in chains, and condemned, perhaps, to servile toil. I who had hoped to live a free Goth, and to win honour for her and for myself by the sword."

"Alas! Eric," said Telemachus, "she grieved that you had felt bound to follow Alaric in his invasion of Italy,

and she earnestly adjures you to do nothing that you know to be unworthy of your Christian faith."

Telemachus had modified the expression of Elfrida's message, since he felt that both to Elfrida and himself Eric's whole career, since he had marched to Italy, seemed unworthy of the Christian faith.

But Eric answered sadly, "Alas! what help or hope has the Christian faith brought me? You, Telemachus, and the Patriarch John and Elfrida—you can live the Christian life fully; but as for me——" he paused a moment in bitter thought, and then added, "And yet I have made efforts, from time to time, to keep alive the memory of the faith in me. For Elfrida's sake, I have refrained from many acts of violence, in which my comrades saw no harm, and have even tried to check them. I have prayed, too, Telemachus. And was I not joining with my fellow-Christians in prayer and praise on that very Easter morning when that accursed traitor and hypocrite Stilicho——" He raised his voice at these words, and two of the guards suddenly stepped forward. "Hold!" they exclaimed, "we will hear no railings at our general; and you, sir monk, if you come here to plot treason against Stilicho, you had better be gone."

"Cowards," cried Eric, turning fiercely upon them, "fit only to seize prisoners by treachery, and abuse them when they are at your mercy."

One of the soldiers raised his weapon as if to strike the prisoner, but Telemachus stepped between them and cried, "Stand back! You have no orders from your general to assault or insult us. I have come here by his leave, and under his safe conduct, and I will only depart when I please, unless the general should himself command me."

"He is right, brother," said the other soldier, as the first paused astonished, with his weapon still uplifted. "Our

general cares little for such railings as these; and it is not *Roman* custom to strike unarmed men."

The first soldier, who was a Vandal by birth, glared fiercely on his comrade; but he lowered his weapon and retired muttering to the back part of the tent. Eric glanced at him for a moment with a look of scorn. Then, turning to Telemachus, he said, "Tell Elfrida what you have seen and heard, and ask her—no! no! tell her that, for her sake and yours, I will hope to learn some day to be a Christian. But Telemachus," he went on, lowering his tone, "since you have more human feeling for women than some monks, can you not do something for another Gothic woman who is now a prisoner in Stilicho's camp? The wife of Alaric," he said in a deep voice, "is here, taken while we were surrounded, unarmed, in the church, and could not strike one blow in her defence. Yet no! it is but little that you or I could do for her. We shall be brought to Rome shortly and then I will ask Elfrida to show her kindness."

"But for your own fate?" said Telemachus.

"God knows," answered Eric, "or, rather, the Devil, and Stilicho knows, but do not ask him. There can be nothing worth Elfrida's hearing that she will not learn all too soon."

"But perhaps," said Telemachus, "we might be able to induce Stilicho to modify your sentence. There are friends in Rome who seem——"

"No! no!" interrupted Eric passionately, "promise me, dear friend, promise me by all that you hold sacred, that you will not demean me by asking favour of this cruel and treacherous man."

"I will not ask anything unworthy of you," answered Telemachus.

"Nay! nay! that is not enough," replied Eric. "Promise me that you will ask nothing, nothing at all, of favour for me."

"Nor for Elfrida?" asked Telemachus.

Eric paused and his lips trembled. Then he said, "At least ask nothing till I have come to Rome and have seen Elfrida. Yes! the favour of seeing her, *that* I will ask, even of Stilicho himself." He muttered the last words between his teeth. Then, drawing Telemachus aside, he ended in a whisper, "And now, farewell, Telemachus! It is not well to give these spies more opportunity for lying and violence. As a Christian, you know," he said, with a bitter smile, "you should spare them that sin. Tell Elfrida that I will think on her words. Bid her," and he smiled affectionately, "bid her trust you, and pray for me to the God who made the Patriarch and you and her."

He pressed his friend's hand once more, and they parted.

## *CHAPTER XV*

# *THE TRIUMPH OF STILICHO*

> "Great captains, with their guns and drums,
> Disturb our judgment for the hour."
>
> J. Russell Lowell.

On his arrival in Rome, Telemachus at once hastened to Elfrida to give her a full account of his interview with Eric. Her joy at hearing that he was alive was soon dashed by the sense of the painfulness and uncertainty of his condition.

She could not but grieve to think how his free spirit was hampered by the restrictions of a prisoner's life; and she thought with dread of the possibility that he might have to endure all the suffering and degradation which, as she knew so well, were a necessary part of a life of slavery. But against this dread there rose up the delightful certainty that Eric would soon be in Rome, and that by some means or other she must surely be allowed to see him again.

"I hear," she said, "that the Senate have voted a Triumph to the Emperor and to Stilicho, and have re-elected them as Consuls. Tell me, Father Telemachus, what think you of this general, Stilicho? Is there any hope that for the sake of ransom, or for the exchange of other prisoners, he will set Eric free?"

"In truth I cannot tell," answered the monk thoughtfully. "He did not seem to me a cruel or vindictive man, rather one given to rough jesting and careless talk. But yet he

gave way to sudden outbursts of passion ; and the letter of Prudentius angered him much."

"I hear," said Elfrida, "that Prudentius is much exercised about the horrors which sometimes follow these Triumphs ; and he especially tried to urge on the Senate and the Emperor the suppression of those horrible shows in which men kill each other for sport, to please the Roman mob. And surely one can scarce believe that a Christian Emperor can sanction such wickedness."

"God knows," answered Telemachus. "They say that this Emperor is but a feeble creature, now moulded by the wishes of his father-in-law, and then again at the mercy of such courtiers as those whom we saw at Constantinople, haunting the steps of his brother Arcadius. But there must be some escape for Eric. It cannot be that he will be condemned to so ignoble an end as this."

"What mean you ?" exclaimed Elfrida. "You do not mean that Stilicho will condemn his captives to make this cruel sport for their conquerors ? It cannot be that Eric——" She paused

"No," said Telemachus ; "it cannot be that you and I, Elfrida, should have been sent to Rome to deliver Eric from his pagan surroundings ; and that we should be thus mocked at last by seeing him fall in so horrible and unchristian a manner. God has sent me to this work by as sure signs as ever were given to man ; and God does not mock us, whatever Stilicho may do." His eye kindled as he spoke ; and Elfrida seemed to gain new courage from his enthusiasm.

Before they could continue their conversation, Eusebius entered the room, with great concern in his face. He greeted Telemachus warmly ; and after congratulating him on his safe return, he added, "And you have come at the right moment. Theophilus and his friends have held a meeting at Chalcedon, in which they have passed

resolutions condemning the Patriarch John; and Theophilus' messengers have even now arrived with letters to the Bishop of Rome, to justify this proceeding. Moreover, a messenger from the Patriarch tells us that there is reason to fear that the Empress Eudoxia has been again provoked against him. It is time that we should put our case fairly before Innocent, and secure that the holy John be not quite overborne by Theophilus."

"I will go with you," said Telemachus. "Farewell, Elfrida, and remember," he said in a lower tone, "that much of Eric's faith depends on you; and he commends himself to your prayers."

During the following month Telemachus set himself to the work of laying before Eusebius an account of the quarrel between Theophilus and the monks of Nitria and of their subsequent reception and protection by the Patriarch of Constantinople. It was well for him that he was so occupied. The sense of his mission for Rome and for Eric pressed heavily upon his mind; and as the time drew nearer for the arrival of Stilicho with his Gothic captives, the tension might have been too severe almost for his reason, had there not been something of a more secular kind to occupy his thoughts. And, in spite of the common work which brought him so close to his colleagues in the embassy from Constantinople, he felt instinctively drawn within himself, as if he was living a life which had as little concern with the daily business that he was carrying on as the life that he had formerly lived on the mountain of Nitria.

Elfrida, on her part, was also somewhat distracted from her anxiety for Eric, by a letter from the lady Olympias, who wrote to her freely of her growing trouble about Chrysostom, and the state of Constantinople; particularly about the bitter hostility of Eudoxia, and the dangers which must follow from it.

"It seems to me sometimes," she wrote, "as if we

women were more powerful for evil than for good. I can do nothing with all my wealth and experience to protect and save the good Patriarch from his enemies; while this fierce, worldly woman can set all Constantinople in an uproar. "Yet," she added, "it was not so while my husband lived. Then I could help at least one man. So do you, Elfrida, be faithful to your Eric; and let no pious Sister of the Aventine persuade you that there is a higher life elsewhere."

Elfrida pressed the letter to her lips; and thought that if Eric were once free and her own, they might soon deliver Chrysostom and Olympias from all their troubles. While she was thus meditating, the door opened and Telemachus entered the room. "I bring you better hopes, Elfrida," he said. "The good Prudentius believes that the coming of Honorius to Rome may be a sign that these horrors are to be mitigated, or prevented. He has already issued one edict, prohibiting senators from taking part in the gladiatorial contests, and it seems probable that if it were not for the influence of Stilicho, these games would be altogether suppressed. Prudentius has shown me some verses that he has written, denouncing these shows, as part of the worship of the heathen gods; and some Christian senators have spoken to him in sympathy and approval of his protest; so he trusts that further efforts may be made in the same direction. And to-morrow," he added, after a pause, "to-morrow Honorius and Stilicho will enter Rome."

"Then," exclaimed Elfrida, clasping her hands in her excitement, "then I shall see Eric again!"

Telemachus paused, and looked at her sadly. He had been carefully collecting all the evidence that he could gather in Rome about the coming festivities, and especially about the treatment of the Goths; and he knew that, whatever should be the final decision of Stilicho, one thing was certain, that Eric and his fellow-captives would have to

march in front of the chariot of their conqueror. At an earlier time of his life such a display would have offended Telemachus, rather from its worldy arrogance than from the indifference which it implied to the feelings of the vanquished. But the purpose of his life had gradually become so closely bound up with the interests of Eric and Elfrida, that he felt with and for them in a more personal manner than would have been possible in his earlier life. For Elfrida, especially, he had learned to feel a mixture of protecting tenderness, as for one placed specially under his charge and devout reverence, as for one called in some inexplicable way to share in his mission; so that he shrank with dread from the thought of exposing her, either to the roughness of the Roman crowd, or to the pain which she must suffer from the spectacle of Eric as a prisoner.

"Promise me, Elfrida," he said, "that you will not leave this house to-morrow until I come to fetch you."

She looked up wondering and anxious; but the sense of his clearness of purpose and the reliance which she had learned to place on his judgment reassured and convinced her. "I promise," she answered; and Telemachus left her with a grateful smile.

Yet it was not without many efforts of self-restraint that Elfrida was able to control her curiosity on the following day, when she heard from her casement the noise of Rome gathering for its holiday; and looking out she saw the crowds thronging to the Sacred Way to welcome Honorius and Stilicho and, as she felt, Eric also.

Telemachus had resolved to be himself a spectator of the Triumph. He had a strange feeling that, as a preparation for the crisis which was coming, he must see and know every detail which affected his friend; and besides, he was sure that Eric would welcome the sight of some friendly face in the crowd. So he hastened to a house which stood near the Sacred Way, a little beyond the arch

which had been completed just in time for the Triumph. He noted with pain that the figures of the captive Goths had been carved on the sides of this arch, and with some surprise he read the announcement that the Gothic nation had been conquered for all time, *in omne ævum domitam.*

How foolishly untrue this announcement was Telemachus could not realize. Perhaps, among all the crowd which was to take part in the spectacle of the day, the only man who could thoroughly recognize the absurdity of the inscription was the great general in whose honour it had been composed. But to Telemachus it suggested a feeling of blasphemous arrogance, which made him shake his head and frown gravely as he looked at it.

The tall figure of the stalwart monk, still wearing his untanned sheepskin, naturally attracted the attention of the merry and gaily dressed crowds who were thronging the road. Most of them knew the detestation with which the devouter Christians regarded all the public games that were to follow the Triumph; and some of them had, no doubt, heard of the special protest of Prudentius and others against the gladiatorial shows. Many jeers, therefore, arose when they saw the monk standing in indignant contemplation of the arch; and some of the loudest came from those nominal Christians who felt some qualms in their own consciences as to the concessions they were making to pagan rites.

"This is one of those holy monks," cried one, "who wishes to stint Rome of her pleasures, and send us all to fasting and penances. Go back to your cave, sir monk; and leave us in peace." "Aye," said another, "the arch reminds him of the warfare that he has fled from. It is not long since that the Emperor drove these cowardly fellows out to fight." "But," cried a third, "this fellow would not fight for the Catholic Church. He's an Arian." "Or an Origenist!" said a fourth,

"What's that?" cried a less informed neighbour.

"Something dangerous," replied the first speaker. "I think it means that he's a spy of the Goths."

A howl rose at this; and though Telemachus's broad shoulders and commanding manner, combined with the good humour naturally produced by a holiday, protected him from actual violence, he was glad enough to make his way through the crowd and take refuge in the house of a friend, from which he hoped to see the procession pass.

Suddenly the trumpets announced the approach of the procession. But the first feeling of the populace was one of disappointment, as they had expected to see the senators in their richly coloured robes heading the procession. Stilicho, however, had exempted the chief magistrates from the degrading office, so often imposed on them, of marching in front of the victor's car. And, however welcome such an omission might be to those who still cared for the honour and dignity of Rome, it could not but cause some irritation to the holiday makers.

"Where are the senators?" muttered one to another in the crowd. "I had always heard that they formed part of the show," said one. "Oh! that is one of Stilicho's concessions to the Christian prejudice," said another. "It was supposed to be a barbarous custom to make the old men display their pomp in that fashion." "Say rather a sign of heathenism, which is really his creed," said a third; "he did not like that the poorer people should see the humiliation of the Roman aristocracy. But how now? What comes here?" As he spoke, two large cars approached bearing the figures of Gothic kings. By the side of the cars went several camels, and on their backs were the hideous Gothic idols whose forms recalled to Telemachus the story which Chrysostom had told him of the persecutions of the Christian Goths by Athanasius. As the strange and ugly heads shook with the motion, they seemed to nod at their

conquerors. The crowd were at first half astonished and half amused ; but those who had heard descriptions of the former Triumphs, in which the rich spoils of the East, the strange productions of barbarous countries had been exhibited before the Roman people, could not but feel that this part also of the show hardly realized their ideal. Nor did the flute players, who followed, entirely pacify this discontent. But all disappointment was merged in the triumphant sense of the greatness of their conquest, when, following close after the cars, came the long line of Gothic captives. A loud shout burst from the crowd at this sight ; but at the sound a stately looking woman, who was marching in front of the procession, raised her downcast head and fixed such a look on those nearest to her that they shrank back in terror ; and an awe-struck whisper passed round that this was the wife of Alaric. Whether a burst of pity struck some of those present, or whether even to the most foolish the thought might have occurred that perhaps the Gothic nation was not quite so crushed but that it might still have spirit to avenge this insult to its chief, a chill fell upon the crowd, and the cheers seemed to die away half uttered.

Telemachus, eagerly watching from the house-top, noticed the sudden lull, and finding in it an opportunity for calmer observation, he peered anxiously among the Gothic captives for the face of his friend. At last in one of the later lines of the procession he saw him, with his hands bound behind him and his head stooping forward ; while his face wore such an expression of mingled anguish and hate, that Telemachus's whole soul went out to him in intense pity ; and before he knew what he was doing, he cried out, " Eric ! "

Eric looked up, and catching sight of the one friendly face fixed in loving sympathy on him, amid that hating crowd, he heaved a deep sigh, and tears rolled down his cheeks. Whether his emotion would have excited sympathy

or scorn from the crowd, it might have been difficult to guess; but their attention was directed at the moment rather to the monk than to the Goth; and some of those who resented the tameness of the show vented their spleen in a revival of their former suspicions. The shouts and invectives became so fierce that the Victors found it almost impossible to restore order; and Telemachus retreated from the house-top till the passion of the crowd should be calmed. He had not long to wait; for suddenly all sounds of discontent and anger were lost in such a roar of applause, as seemed to shake the houses near, and to echo round the seven hills. Again and again the cheer was renewed; and Telemachus, taking advantage of this change of feeling in the crowd, returned quickly to his former position, and saw the triumphal car bearing the two consuls, Stilicho and Honorius. With a strange eagerness he gazed on the face of the man who held in his hands the fate of Eric and Elfrida. The victor of Pollentia and Verona, the practical dictator of the Roman Empire, so long as courtiers and intriguers would allow it, was lost for Telemachus in the captor of his friend; and he anxiously scanned the expression of the victorious general, to see if any sign of mercy could be traced in it. Different enough he looked, in the gold-embroidered robe and flowered tunic of Triumph, from the easy-going boon companion whom Telemachus had seen in the tent at Verona; and the glance of cold scorn with which he regarded the shouting populace seemed to promise little hope of gentler feelings.

But a change had now passed over the sounds from below. The first wild burst of unbroken enthusiasm had given place to discordant cries; for while on the one side the admirers of Stilicho echoed his name to the skies, on the other hand his enemies tried to cover their ill-suppressed hostility to him by a show of loyalty to the Emperor; and the shouts of "Vivat Honorius!" were raised in a

manner that was evidently intended to drown the applause offered to Stilicho. Then, for the first time, Telemachus noticed, with a flash of surprise and relief, that a tender expression came over the face of the general as he turned with a gentle and protecting manner to his Imperial son-in-law. Telemachus could not see the glance of awe, and half-suspicious fear, with which Honorius met his father-in-law's look; so it was with the comforting memory of Stilicho's last look in his mind that the monk descended from his lofty position and made his way through the streets to Elfrida in order to report to her the events of the day.

He found her in a state of much agitation. The nervous anxiety, caused by the uncertainty of the early part of the day, had been increased in the afternoon by the return of one of two of the pious ladies who had accompanied her from Constantinople. They had been abroad in the city, partly to pay their devotions at the shrines of St. Peter and St. Paul; partly to hear the latest news; and they had come back with the information that the great games were to be held on the following day. This they resented, not only on the ground of the frivolity and cruelty of these entertainments, but because the next day, being the first of the new year, was kept at that time as a fast among the stricter Christians. The ladies had been so offended at this profanation, and so full of their denunciations of Stilicho's heathen tendencies, that it was long before Elfrida could elicit from them any information about the disposal of the Gothic prisoners. At last, however, she had gathered that Stilicho would probably sell some of them into slavery and send them to the mines. Her excitement at this terrible news had been so great that she had found much difficulty in keeping her promise to Telemachus and awaiting his arrival. Indeed she confessed that she should hardly have been able to remain quiet, had it not been for her ignorance

of the Roman streets and her uncertainty as to Eric's place of confinement.

Telemachus promised to escort her to the officer who had the chief charge of the prisoners, and with whom he had made a slight acquaintance, when he was in the camp at Verona. "Then," he added, "I will go to the house of Stilicho to see whether he may not be moved to a more generous decision."

The officer in charge of the prisoners heard Telemachus's request with some surprise; but he said that Stilicho had spoken to him, more than once, in a respectful manner of the monk who visited him in the camp; and that he had further directed that Eric the son of Wulfhere should be treated with some consideration while he remained in Rome; "and though," he added, with a courteous gesture towards Elfrida, "this lady may see and hear things which will scarce please her, it is certainly within my power to take her to see the prisoner."

Much relieved by this interview, and recognizing from the manner of the officer that Elfrida would be safe in his charge, Telemachus hastened to the house of Stilicho. The general had just returned from a service in the church, and was still wearing the consular robes. But on hearing who it was that asked for entrance, he at once ordered that Telemachus should be admitted, and welcomed him cordially. He seemed to have thrown off the cold stateliness of the morning, and to have resumed something of the easy geniality of his manner in the camp of Verona.

"Ha! my friend from Nitria!" he cried. "Did you, too, come out to see the Triumph to-day? You, at least, will not hold with these foolish Romans, that there is no more to be feared from the Goths."

"I trust, most excellent sir," replied Telemachus, "that there is more to be hoped than feared from many of them."

"Why, to say the truth," said Stilicho, with astonish-

ment, "I myself may have some thoughts of that kind. But I should have expected that to a monk they were Arians, or heathens, or something of that sort, only to be destroyed, for the greater glory of God. Ah, I remember though," as he saw Telemachus about to protest, "you have a friend among the prisoners, Eric the son of Wulfhere; and doubtless you have come to plead for him."

Telemachus bowed assent.

"Well," replied Stilicho, "both you and he are more to my fancy than many of these Romans who applaud me so noisily at this moment of victory, and so I have given him the choice of a more honourable escape from his imprisonment than that which I have offered to some of his countrymen."

"He will be most thankful, your Excellency," answered Telemachus, "for an honourable escape from a life of slavery in the mines."

"Doubtless," replied Stilicho; "but you should warn the more foolish members of your brotherhood not to hinder him in this new career that is offered to him."

"Mean you," asked Telemachus, "the career of a soldier in the Roman army?"

"Why no," answered Stilicho; "the young Goth would scarcely hold that to be compatible with his honour. Nor, under present circumstances, would I venture to offer it to him. Hereafter perhaps; but what better preparation could he have than the career of a gladiator?"

"Of a gladiator!" exclaimed Telemachus. "Mean you those men who murder each other for the amusement of the Roman people?"

Stilicho looked for a moment rather startled at this question; but added, after a minute, "Say rather for the encouragement of military valour in the Roman people."

"And have you indeed found," said Telemachus, "that those are the bravest in times of danger who have

been trained to amuse themselves with bloodshed? Were the Roman crowd, who were so panic stricken at the advance of Alaric, so much braver than that Bishop of Milan, of whom men say that even you have spoken in terms of honour?"

"Ah!" said Stilicho; "Ambrosius was one in a thousand, and he would have been worth fifty of my usual soldiers to me. But for the mass of men such scenes as these are necessary. Besides, the Senate wishes it. The Prætor of the games has prepared them, and the people expect them."

"And think you," cried Telemachus with a sudden burst of fervour, "that either Senate or People will avail to help you, if a day of treachery and misfortune should overtake you? Have you not bloodshed enough to answer for in the world, that you must idly throw away men's lives to gratify the follies of a mob whom you half despise? For every soul whom you have led to rejoice in bloodshed and to find amusement in the wounds and sufferings of others, there will come a day of reckoning, when your life shall be required, not merely for the earthly lives that you have destroyed, but for the souls whom you have ruined!"

Stilicho looked at the speaker for a few moments in silence. Conflicting feelings seemed to be passing through his mind. Perhaps some anticipation occurred to him of the treachery which even then may have been gathering round him, and which was to end in his fall and violent death. A recollection, too, came back as he looked on Telemachus, which chimed in with the words of the monk; and he answered, "You speak bravely, sir monk; and no one shall ever say that Stilicho has failed to honour courage, even in his enemies. But your Bishop Ambrosius had another quality, which I should like to test in you. He persuaded me once to deliver into his hands a criminal whom I had destined to fight with the beasts; and who

had taken refuge in a church in Milan. But when Ambrosius found that the man had indeed been guilty of offences against the law, readily consented that he should be banished from the city and the neighbourhood. Now I say not that Eric has been guilty of such direct crimes against the State; but, as he is an enemy of Rome, I am bound to beware of him; and in all these cases the loser pays. Will you engage for him that if I set him free without further delay he will promise never again to bear arms against the Roman State?"

Telemachus paused. It did not occur to him at the moment how repugnant such an offer would be to Eric; but he doubted whether, having gained so much, he ought not to make a further effort to save Rome from this horrible crime; or whether he ought to think of Eric alone, when the moral welfare of this great city was at stake. Then, even while this thought was passing through his mind, there came to him the memory of his last interview with Chrysostom, and the Patriarch's cry of pain at the thought that after all his labours he had not saved even one soul. How then could he, an obscure and ignorant monk, dare to throw away in proud unthankfulness this opportunity of one rescue? Perhaps, after all, he had been sent to Rome merely for Eric's sake. He raised his head, and looking steadily at Stilicho answered: "I will acquaint him with your offer, which I doubt not he will accept, with thankfulness."

Stilicho smiled. "You are a brave man, sir monk," he said. "But the courage of those who are trained as you say, in bloodshed is, after all, a different thing from yours. Yet it may be that you will have some power with your friend; and I trust to you to use it for the acceptance of my terms."

Telemachus bowed, and hastened to announce the result of his conference to Eric.

## CHAPTER XVI

## BREAK WITH THE RESPECTABLE WORLD

"When asked how he would be tried, he answered that he would be tried by God; at which all the lawyers made a great hiss."

Trial of John Jones, the Regicide. *State Trials.*

In the meantime, the officer in whose charge Telemachus had left Elfrida, had conducted her to a large building with which she had not been hitherto acquainted. As she approached it, she saw, rising just beyond it, the huge circle of the Colosseum, and the officer remarked, with a careless gesture of his hand, "That is where the games will be held to-morrow."

Like all earnest Christians of the time, Elfrida had been impressed by her teachers with a horror of the public spectacles of the day; and she shuddered slightly as she looked at the building. It seemed somewhat ominous to her that Eric should be imprisoned so near a place which was connected with such disgraceful associations. But all thoughts of the kind were lost in delight when the officer opened the side door of a room into which she was shown, and she saw Eric standing before her, not as she had expected, in chains, nor even in torn and dusty garments; but in light and glittering armour, and holding in his hand a sword which he was poising as if to weigh it.

He turned suddenly as she entered, started with astonishment, and dropped the sword from his hands. In another moment they were in each other's arms; and, for a few minutes, all the evils in the world seemed to be forgotten. "At last!" Elfrida drew back, exclaiming, "Then they have set you free!"

"Partly so," replied Eric; "at least I am free to fight for my freedom."

"What!" exclaimed Elfrida. "Will they suffer you to rejoin Alaric? And can you think it worth your while again to face these terrible Roman soldiers?"

"Would to God it were possible!" cried Eric eagerly. "But, for the present, I must fight to amuse the Roman mob, and to do honour to their hero Stilicho." He turned away as he spoke, and a flush of shame passed over his face.

"Oh, Eric!" exclaimed Elfrida, "you cannot mean that you are to take part in these wicked games, in order to gratify the blood-thirstiness of a Roman mob. Did not Telemachus tell you that I entreated you to do nothing contrary to the Christian faith?"

"And did not Telemachus give you my answer," retorted Eric, "that I could not live up to the faith which guides you and him?"

"No," said Elfrida; "he brought me no such wild and mad answer. Christ died and lives for us all; and He will conquer at last, if you will not turn from Him."

"But Elfrida," said Eric, "do you know what you ask? Do you know the alternative which was offered me? To work underground, in dread of the slave-master's whip, in a far country, separated from all I know."

Elfrida wrung her hands. The memory of her own short experience of slavery came back to her mind; and she wept bitterly at the thought that such a fate could be in store for Eric. "But surely," said she, "Honorius and the Christian senators would never consent that the captives of the Roman army should be condemned to so cruel a fate?"

"Honorius!" exclaimed Eric, with a bitter laugh. "He can do little except obey the orders of Stilicho, or some other like adviser; and as for Christians, Elfrida, these men pretend that it is Christian mercy which pre-

vents them from sacrificing the lives of their prisoners to their gods, as the honester heathens would have done."

"But Telemachus tells me," said Elfrida in a piteous tone, "that he did not find this Stilicho so wholly hard-hearted—he has a wife and children—perchance if we went to entreat——"

"Be silent!" said Eric, with a sudden sternness; "better even mines and the slave whip, than to stoop to ask mercy of Stilicho."

"But Stilicho offers you mercy," cried another voice, "without any entreaty from you." And turning round, the lovers saw Telemachus standing near them.

"What!" exclaimed Eric. "Have you forgotten the promise which you made to me at Verona?"

"It is you who forget," replied Telemachus. "I only consented to wait till Stilicho should return to Rome. And it is in Rome, at his own house, that I have just seen him."

"And what mercy does the ruffian offer me?" cried Eric fiercely.

But Elfrida raised her hand in remonstance; and he became outwardly calm.

"He offers," replied Telemachus, "complete freedom on condition that you will leave Italy and fight no more against Rome."

"Thank God," exclaimed Elfrida; "That is a most just condition."

But Eric drew back, and repelled the hand which Telemachus had stretched out to him. "What!" he exclaimed. "Fight no more against Rome! Leave the treachery of Pollentia unavenged! Leave Alaric's wife a prisoner with the Romans! Let me swear, like Hannibal," and he raised his hand.

"Swear not at all!" said Telemachus sternly, seizing the upraised hand. "If you cannot remember that Hannibal was a heathen, and therefore unworthy of your imitation,

remember at least that the attempt to keep his oath brought destruction on his family, on himself, and on Cathage. What can you do to avenge Pollentia? You will merely waste more blood, both of Goths and Romans, in a useless struggle. What can you do to rescue the wife of Alaric? Do you not know that, if any evil is meditated against her, it is far more certain to be executed, if Alaric again invades Italy?"

Eric was startled at the vehemence of the speaker. It seemed as if the gentle and unworldly monk, on whom he had been used to look with somewhat patronizing friendliness as on one ill fitted to deal with problems of the world, had suddenly become his guide and teacher, almost his master. He paused, uncertain whether to resent or to admire. Then Elfrida spoke. "You can think of the wife of Alaric, Eric, but do you not think of me? Cannot I do anything to help and comfort this unfortunate woman. If you rush madly into new contests, you may probably destroy her; you will certainly ruin my happiness. Oh, Eric! is your love of revenge so much stronger than your love of me?"

"Alas, Elfrida!" began Eric, more tenderly; "do I not think of you? Do I not remember what you——"

Before he could finish his sentence the door of an inner room opened and a large coarse-looking man entered. "How now?" he exclaimed roughly; "this is no place for monks and women. You must come to your exercises."

Eric turned and glared at the intruder. But the latter strode close up to him, and said in a deep, fierce voice, "Remember your oath!"

"What oath?" exclaimed Telemachus, who stood nearest to the speaker.

The man glanced scornfully at him, and then pointed to a tablet on the wall, on which were written the following words:

We have sworn an oath to Saturninus that we will be burnt, bound, beaten, and killed, and whatever else Saturninus shall have commanded; and, as lawful gladiators, we most religiously devote our bodies and lives to our master.

Telemachus went up to the tablet, preventing Elfrida from approaching; but, before he had finished reading the terrible words, Saturninus, the Master of the Gladiators, had thrust Eric into the inner room and barred the door against all comers.

Telemachus stepped back in dismay; then he turned to Elfrida, who stood pale and wondering, and said in a resolute tone, "We must save him at any cost."

"But how?" said Elfrida.

"God will guide us," replied Telemachus firmly. "Let me now take you back to the house, where your companions are expecting you. And then I must at once hasten to speak with Eusebius."

They returned in silence to the house where Elfrida lived; but as they went Telemachus's eye caught sight of a large notice, fastened up in a public place, containing the names of those gladiators who were to fight in the morrow's show; and the name of Eric, the son of Wulfhere, was conspicuous among them.

When Telemachus reached the house where Eusebius and his friends were gathered, he found them much excited by the news which they had just received from Constantinople. The startling story of Eudoxia's first vengeance had just reached them; and the letters of their friends described, in a graphic manner, the violent entry of Theophilus into the city; the indignation of Chrysostom's flock; the restraint which he had exercised over them; and finally his self-surrender and consequent expulsion in chains from the city. It was natural that, while absorbed in the anxious discussions suggested by these events, the friends of Chrysostom could pay little attention to the story of the Gothic prisoner. But at last Telemachus succeeded in drawing

Eusebius aside, and pouring out to him his appeal for another protest against the gladiatorial shows.

"It is useless," answered the deacon, shaking his head. "We have done what we could; and the good Prudentius has worked with us. But Honorius and the senators are mere wax in the hands of Stilicho; and he, as you know, is more than half a heathen."

"But he must be saved!" exclaimed Telemachus passionately.

"God may change his heart," answered Eusebius, "but at present his victories have hardened it."

"His victories!" repeated Telemachus, bewildered. "I speak of Eric, the captive Goth, the son of Wulfhere."

"A captive Goth!" exclaimed Eusebius. "But what right have we to single out one of these victims who, perchance, is willing enough to shed blood in this or any other manner?"

"Oh, Eusebius!" exclaimed Telemachus, "you know not the temptations to which he has yielded, nor the horrible oath by which he is bound." And he repeated, with a shudder, the formula which he had just read.

Eusebius shuddered also; but he answered, "A man who would bind himself by such an oath, Telemachus, is past our saving. We must leave him to his fate. And now listen to me," he continued, before Telemachus could renew the argument; "to-morrow, as you know, is a fast; and we hold a special service and prayer for the deliverance of our brothers in Constantinople; we must then meet after the service and deliberate what can be done for the Patriarch, and at least to prepare an appeal against the iniquities of Theophilus and Eudoxia."

"Alas! Eusebius," said Telemachus, in a tone of bitter pain. "Alas, my friend, I cannot be with you, then. The Patriarch himself will tell you that it was for the deliverance of the Goths that I was sent to Rome, and that he looked

upon Eric as at once the chief agent and the first fruits of our mission. Therefore I must sacrifice everything to save him ; even if I go to the Amphitheatre for the purpose."

"What !" exclaimed Eusebius, in a voice of thunder, which startled the rest of the party in their deliberations, and made them gather round the speakers. "Do you propose, on the day of the fast of the Church, while the Patriarch who sent you hither is in bonds and exile, to go into the very centre of the abominations of Rome, to the scenes of frivolity and bloodshed and idle dissipation ? Do you dare to plead the name of the Patriarch for such a profanation of the day ? for such an insult to Christian feeling ? But no," he said, softening his tone again, "this must be some magic, some horrible fascination, like that of which I spoke to you the other day in the Forum ; like that which drew the besotted worshippers of the heathen gods into the groves of Daphne."

Telemachus paused and looked round at the assembled body of Christians. He knew well the detestation which, not they alone, but every great Christian teacher, had expressed for those scenes of frivolity, bloodshed, and occasional indecency. He knew, too, only too well that by cutting himself off from the little band who stood before him, he should become, not merely a solitary stranger in a strange city, but an outcast, separated from all those who were dearest to him in faith and sympathy, and identified in their eyes, and in those of all the leaders of the Church, with the heathen world.

To the monk, brought up in the Egyptian monastery, and then forced to stand alone with this small group, first in Constantinople and then in Rome, the prospect had a bitterness which is hard to realize in the midst of our modern life, where the world and the Church melt into each other by such natural and gradual processes. Yet for this very separation it was that all his life had been preparing him.

The solitary struggles and prayers in Nitria; the wider hope and larger sympathy which he had almost insensibly imbibed from the teachings of Origen; the bitter denunciations of Jerome; Chrysostom's heroic defiance of public opinion; and last, but not least, the high sense of responsibility which had been thrown on him by his relations to Elfrida and to Eric; all seemed to nerve him for this tremendous struggle.

"No!" he answered in a strange voice, which was hardly recognizable as his own; "No! it is no heathen fascination which has seized me; it is the voice of God which calls me to this work."

"Blasphemer!" cried all present; and those nearest drew back from him with scorn. "Begone from among us," said Eusebius sternly, "and take your part with the heathen, whom you have chosen for your friends! You have deserted the Church in its hour of danger to revel with idolaters, and share with them in lust and bloodshed."

Holding up his hands as if to guard himself from this outburst of scorn and hatred, Telemachus fled from the house into the streets of Rome. It was now growing late; yet whither should he turn? He could not go back to the house from which he had been thrust out; he could not take refuge with any Christian, because he could give no explanation of the circumstances under which he had been expelled. He would not go to one of the taverns, which would then be the scenes of revelry and disorder; nor would he take refuge in the house of a heathen, lest he should give scandal to the Church, and a just excuse for the accusations of his former friends. He must, therefore, remain out of doors all night. But a night in the open air, under the Italian sky, was not a very alarming prospect for a man of strong constitution, who had been all his life inured to hardships. So he went down into the Forum and lay down

near that spot [1] which was afterwards to be the scene of the first step in the conversion of England. Wearied out in body and mind by the events of the day, he soon fell asleep.

Once more in his dreams there appeared before him the same figure which he had seen in his vision at Nitria. Again he recognized, by some mysterious instinct, the face of Origen. But he was no longer in the lecture-room at Alexandria ; rather it seemed as if he had been wandering, like Telemachus himself, through the Roman Forum, and had paused under the very portico where Telemachus had fallen asleep. The face was looking upward ; but its expression was very different from that which it had worn in the Egyptian vision. There was still pain there ; but pain which was conquered and suppressed by a deeper joy. He seemed to be gazing on some vision, not perceptible to the sleeper ; but as Telemachus listened he heard words which he had often read before, but which had never sounded so beautiful. "Until the disorder shall pass by, the just man trusts in the shadow of the wings of God ; but when it passes by and vanishes, he no longer trusts in the shadow, but in God Himself."

And even while Telemachus looked, the face once more changed. The expression of pain seemed more completely merged in a holier and deeper joy ; and as the head stooped towards him, he saw a smile, the like of which he had never seen on any earthly face. Then he knew that it was no longer Origen who was bending over him ; and as he raised his hands, with an intense longing, towards the figure, it gradually melted away ; but as it did so there fell clear and sweet through the midnight sky the words, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

[1] The column of Phœas, erected in the Roman Forum A.D. 608, is supposed by some historians to stand upon the spot where Gregory the Great saw the English boys exposed for sale, and struck by their beauty he thought the country whence they had been taken worth winning for Christianity.

## *CHAPTER XVII*

# *THE FINAL VICTORY*

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Gospel of St. John xv. 13.

WHEN Telemachus woke in the morning a strange vigour and refreshment had come over him. He felt no surprise at finding himself lying in the open air; for he remembered clearly what had happened, and what he had to do. The one point which troubled him was the thought of Elfrida. He had not ventured to return to her, at the time of his expulsion from Eusebius and his companions; for he feared to trouble her with the doubts and misery which had followed, by a natural reaction, that moment of ecstatic courage in which he had resisted and defied his former friends. But he now resolved that before he made his final effort for Eric he must see Elfrida, partly because he was anxious for her safety, partly because he longed to confide his purpose to the one person from whom he could expect intelligent sympathy.

He found her at the same house at which he had left her; but she came towards him with outstretched hands, and an air of supplication on her face. "Father Telemachus!" she exclaimed, "they have cast me forth. These holy women, who have come from Constantinople to worship here, will have nothing to do with the betrothed bride of a gladiator. But you do not condemn me!

You do not hold that I should have thrown Eric off in his troubles, and deserted him when all men speak ill of him!"

Her words came upon Telemachus with a sudden shock; for they recalled the taunts of Eusebius about his desertion of Chrysostom and the Church in their hour of danger; and for a moment he stood paralysed. Elfrida could not understand his silence; and she cried, with a passionate wail, "Oh! surely you have turned against us too!"

Then Telemachus at once recovered himself and answered, "God forbid! I am come to tell you——" But again he paused suddenly; for it had just occurred to him that Elfrida, in her moment of desperate devotion to her lover, might insist on herself appearing in the Colosseum to show her sympathy with Eric to the last; and Telemachus felt instinctively that that was no place for her; that though, as he now more and more vividly saw, it might be his duty to die for Eric, yet the part of Elfrida was to live for him; and that for her to appear in such a place, with any purpose but death, would be a needless defiance of Christian feeling. These thoughts rushed through his mind in a moment; and he at once resolved to throw away this last chance of human sympathy, and to tell Elfrida nothing of his own rejection by his friends, or of his purpose to enter the amphitheatre. He therefore suddenly changed his sentence and said, "I am come to see what can be done for you."

"Do you think," said Elfrida, "that Eusebius and his friends could find some house among the Christians here where I could live?"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Telemachus.

Elfrida did not ask why. The answer corresponded so well to her own despairing feeling that it seemed to require no explanation. "There was indeed one," she said, after a pause, "who sent to me yesterday an offer of friendship and protection, but that was a protection which I could not accept."

"Whom mean you?" asked Telemachus eagerly. "It was the haughty Serena," answered Elfrida; "the wife of Stilicho, Eric's enemy, who has condemned him to this terrible fate. You could not expect me to accept that protection!"

"No," answered Telemachus, with a sort of shudder; "it would not be in keeping with our purpose, or with your duty as Eric's betrothed."

"No!" cried Elfrida, "I knew you would see that. I will rather go—— Nay there is but one place to which I ought to go. I will go to the Gothic prisoners, to the wife of Alaric, and remain with her till Alaric sets us free."

"Perchance you do wisely," replied Telemachus, "to stay with the Gothic prisoners; and I will myself escort you thither."

They descended into the street and made their way to the house where the Gothic women, who had been taken at Verona and Pollentia, were being guarded. As they were approaching the place, Telemachus spoke again: "Remember, Elfrida, that however much you may desire to show sympathy with the wife of Alaric in your trouble and her own, you must be on your guard. She might give you advice, in her pain and despair, which a Christian may not follow."

As he spoke he looked up and saw the thronging crowds hastening towards the Colosseum; and he heard from their eager words that they expected the games to begin shortly. He turned to Elfrida as she entered the house which they had been seeking and, pressing her hand, said, "Farewell! this may be the last time we may ever meet. Do not forget your warning to Eric that he should do nothing unworthy of the Christian faith; and tell him to remember that I love this Rome which he hates, and that I charge him to spare it, for my sake, and for the sake of the faith which is dear to you and me." Once more he pressed her

hand, then turned away without any lingering look, and rushed into the crowd.

Elfrida gazed after him for a minute. The passing fierceness, which had been roused in her by the attacks of the women, and by the thought of Eric's sufferings, died away as she looked after the receding figure of the monk; and the thought came over her that there might yet be some nobler way of saving her lover than by any forcible rescue which he could devise. As Telemachus made his way with great strides through the gay and laughing crowd, which was hastening to the Colosseum, his tall and muscular figure attracted the attention of those around him, and many jests were passed on his appearance. Suddenly, as he drew near the Colosseum, there sounded above the merry voices of the crowd the notes of a chant; and he saw, slowly pasing along the street towards the church of St. Clement, the little band of friends who had discarded him on the previous day. He glanced at the sober figures and devout faces of the clergy, and contrasted their appearance with that of the gay and frivolous throng around him. He listened as they sang, "Why do the heathen rage?" and noted how the crowd, half astonished and half amused, fell back before them as they passed slowly on to the church. A pang seized his heart at the thought that he must be considered an outcast from the ranks of the faithful, and a friend of the dissolute and the heathen. Just then a friendly and respectful voice near him asked, "Do you not wish to join the procession, reverend sir? We can make a way for you, if you desire it."

"No!" said Telemachus, resolutely turning from the speaker. "My way lies there," and he pointed to the Colosseum which was now close before him. The man looked at him with astonishment; those near him, who had heard his words, began whispering to one another, and the whispers were followed by a burst of scornful laughter.

Telemachus tried to drown the impression of the scorn by putting new energy into his efforts to reach the Colosseum ; and as he pressed through the crowd he received some blows in return for his pressure on the passengers. But the rush onward was too great to allow of any important hindrance to his progress, and he soon found himself actually within the walls of the Colosseum.

He made his way, instinctively, to the lowest line of seats, next to the arena. Then he stood up and glanced round at the building which he had seen so vividly in his dream at Constantinople. His figure attracted renewed attention ; but neither the attention, nor the jests which it provoked, lasted long, for they were drowned in a burst of cheering, as through one of the upper entrances there came in stately procession the senators of Rome, and last among them the Præfect of the city and the Prætor who superintended the games. Close behind him came Stilicho himself. The Emperor entered last, and took his seat in the Imperial chair. Telemachus noticed the half-pitying look which Stilicho cast on his royal son-in-law ; and he noticed, yet more plainly, the timid and reluctant manner in which Honorius acknowledged the shouts of the crowd, as if it were much against his will that he was present at all. Then renewed cheers were raised for Stilicho ; and Telemachus cast one indignant glance at the man whom he considered the cause of Eric's fate. The general, as he looked proudly round the amphitheatre, noticed the monk with a glance of astonishment, which was speedily followed by a smile. He turned to Symmachus, who sat near, and pointed out Telemachus, and they both laughed. Had he, then, after all, only given the enemies of the Lord the opportunity to blaspheme ? Oh that this torture might end, and the time for action come !

Then a fresh sound was heard, and Telemachus turned round to the arena, hoping that now the games were really

to begin ; but it was only the spectators of the Equestrian Order taking their seats.

The monk continued gazing at the arena and did not know that another acquaintance had caught sight of him, and was watching his movements with attention. At last he heard a sound which evidently came from below, a sudden rattle of wheels, a cracking of whips, and in a few minutes more the charioteers were careering around the arena. Why had this been placed first among the games ? Was it to remind him of the Hippodrome, against which Chrysostom had so solemnly warned him ? He covered his eyes with his hands, and prayed intensely, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

"*Aut insanit, aut versus facit !*" cried a merry voice in his ear ; and starting involuntarily at the sound he looked up and saw beside him, dressed in the equestrian robe, his old acquaintance Claudian, who had just made his way down to a seat beside him.

"Let me not disturb your inspiration, Brother," said Claudian. "But I should have thought that this spectacle might have helped the worship of the muses, or of whatever deity the Christian faith provides as their substitute. And know you," he went on, while Telemachus gazed at him with a half-confused, half-horrified air, "know you, that you have brought us more spectators than yourself to-day ? I saw you making your way in this direction, just as I came up with a recent convert to your faith, who was trying to escape from the crowd, and to avoid the worldly scenes of the amphitheatre. 'See, my friend,' said I, 'there is a holy monk yonder ; not one of your lazy Roman fellows, but an Egyptian monk from the sacred mount of Nitria ; and yet he thinks no shame to join in our heathen festivities.' I promise you our convert's scruples disappeared at that, and he followed me into the theatre."

Telemachus rose from his feet and looked in the direction

in which Claudian pointed. He quickly recognized a young convert, whom he had seen in the house of Eusebius, and who was now trying to drown the recollection of his scruples by joining, as loudly as his neighbours, in the bets and other signs of sympathy with special charioteers. Telemachus darted at the youth a look which really expressed his own shame and vexation at the scene; but which seemed to the young convert simply intended as a stern rebuke for his frivolity. He paused, with the utterance of a wager almost on his lips, and sank into his seat pale and astonished. But an angry murmur arose from those near him, and also from some below, from whom the tall figure of the monk was excluding their view of the arena. Telemachus sat down again, astonished at the effect of his look; and Claudian lightly rallied him on his attempt to play the priest, even in the midst of the games.

Telemachus had once more sunk into his former fit of abstraction, and the poet, soon wearying of jests which provoked no response and hardly seemed to be heard, returned to his former seat in the theatre. A sudden pause, then a new sound of rushing and roaring startled Telemachus again; and he saw the fierce eyes of a tiger glaring as it rushed round the arena. Was Eric, then, to encounter the wild beasts? And a momentary relief came to his mind, partly from the thought that even this would involve a nobler fate for his friend than to die while shedding human blood for sport, partly from the hope that he himself might die like one of the early Christians. But no, this was to be no equal encounter between man and beast; for from the entrance from which he looked for the appearance of Eric, came no lightly armed gladiator, but men mounted on horses and accoutred in imitation of hunters of the desert. Again Telemachus turned away his attention; and again it was roused once more by the entry of more armed men. Once more his expectation was disappointed.

It was only a mimic war dance which was to be represented, and Eric was not among the performers.

But the impatience which was growing in him was now evidently shared by the crowd at large. The death of the tiger, and the danger which the huntsmen had encountered, had whetted their desire for further bloodshed; and cries arose for the appearance of the gladiators. A horror seized Telemachus. Would the fierce thirst for blood, which had overcome Augustine, be too strong for him also? Would he be carried away by the mad longing which was seizing the crowd? In agony of mind he prayed earnestly, and once more the vision of the last night seemed to come before him. Again he was roused by a new shout of the crowd, and he saw from one side of the arena a half-naked man enter hastily, waving a net in one hand, and a sharp trident in the other. Telemachus glanced at him, but he knew in a moment that it was not Eric; then another shout followed: a tall, fair-haired man, lightly armed, and balancing in his hand a sword, rushed after the first comer. It was Eric, but with a glare in his eyes such as Telemachus had never seen there before.

Then he knew that the time was come; and as Eric rushed round the arena after the Retiarius, Telemachus suddenly swept aside the man near him, bounded across the barrier, which separated him from the arena, and standing directly in front of his friend, with raised hand, exclaimed, "Thou shalt do no murder."

Eric started back, astonished at the apparition, and the sword dropped from his hand. Before he could recover it, a fierce howl of indignation burst from the crowd, and confused cries of "Down with the monk!" "Gothic spy!" "Enemy of the gods!" "Arian!" "Traitor!" were heard from different parts of the amphitheatre.

For a moment Telemachus stood silently facing the opponents. Then suddenly a stone flew from an unknown

hand and struck him on the forehead. He reeled back. Eric would have rushed forward to help him, but before he could reach him a crowd of people had sprung into the arena and thrown themselves on the monk. Eric was forced back to the place where he had entered, with much difficulty saving himself from being crushed to death. A wild hubbub of noise and disorder ended the games of the day.

* * * *

On the following morning Elfrida was sitting with the wife of Alaric when Eric suddenly entered the room. He appeared, to her surprise, in his old Gothic dress, but deadly pale. She sprang forward to him with delight. "Oh, Eric!" she cried. "Are you indeed free from that horrible life?"

"Free," he answered, "but at what cost! Have you heard?"

"We heard rumours," replied Elfrida, "that there had been a great disturbance in the theatre, which cut short the games."

"Telemachus tried to save me," said Eric bitterly, "and the mob murdered him. Oh, Elfrida! I would have saved him, but I could not. I was not worthy of it." And he burst into tears.

"This then," said Elfrida, "was the purpose with which he came to Rome. Oh, God, that we could have died, Eric, instead of him!"

"But yet," exclaimed Eric, looking up, "he has conquered in his death, most strangely! Honorius has issued an edict finally abolishing the Gladiator Shows, and declaring Telemachus a saint." He laughed bitterly, even in his grief. "As if we needed any Emperor or Bishop to tell us that!"

"Then you are free," exclaimed Elfrida, "really free! Free from that life of misery and shame."

"Yes, free, Elfrida," answered Eric; "free to marry, and to defend my wife with the sword." And he took her hand in his.

"No, Eric!" she exclaimed. "The last words of Telemachus to me were that he had loved Rome, and that he adjured you to spare it for his sake. Remember there are lands in Mœsia, still granted to the Goths, on which you and I can live in peace. Our fiercer kinsmen may mock us by calling us the 'Lesser Goths,' and despise us for having left the warlike ways of our fathers; but we can live to do honour to the memory, and follow the example, of a braver man than ever drew the sword."

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